

Tour through the Eastern Counties of England, 1722

Daniel Defoe

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by Daniel Defoe

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Tour through the Eastern Counties of England, 1722

I began my travels where I purpose to end them, viz., at the City of London, and therefore my account of the city itself will come last, that is to say, at the latter end of my southern progress; and as in the course of this journey I shall have many occasions to call it a circuit, if not a circle, so I chose to give it the title of circuits in the plural, because I do not pretend to have travelled it all in one journey, but in many, and some of them many times over; the better to inform myself of everything I could find worth taking notice of.

I hope it will appear that I am not the less, but the more capable of giving a full account of things, by how much the more deliberation I have taken in the view of them, and by how much the oftener I have had opportunity to see them.

I set out the 3rd of April, 1722, going first eastward, and took what I think I may very honestly call a circuit in the very letter of it; for I went down by the coast of the Thames through the Marshes or Hundreds on the south side of the county of Essex, till I came to Malden, Colchester, and Harwich, thence continuing on the coast of Suffolk to Yarmouth; thence round by the edge of the sea, on the north and west side of Norfolk, to Lynn, Wisbech, and the Wash; thence back again, on the north side of Suffolk and Essex, to the west, ending it in Middlesex, near the place where I began it, reserving the middle or centre of the several counties to some little excursions, which I made by themselves.

Passing Bow Bridge, where the county of Essex begins, the first observation I made was, that all the villages which may be called the neighbourhood of the city of London on this, as well as on the other sides thereof, which I shall speak to in their order; I say, all those villages are increased in buildings to a strange degree, within the compass of about twenty or thirty years past at the most.

The village of Stratford, the first in this county from London, is not only increased, but, I believe, more than doubled in that time; every vacancy filled up with new houses, and two little towns or hamlets, as they may be called, on the forest side of the town entirely new, namely Maryland Point and the Gravel Pits, one facing the road to Woodford and Epping, and the other facing the road to Ilford; and as for the hither part, it is almost joined to Bow, in spite of rivers, canals, marshy grounds, &c. Nor is this increase of building the case only in this and all the other villages round London; but the increase of the value and rent of the houses formerly standing has, in that compass of years above-mentioned, advanced to a very great degree, and I may venture to say at least the fifth part; some think a third part, above what they were

before.

This is indeed most visible, speaking of Stratford in Essex; but it is the same thing in proportion in other villages adjacent, especially on the forest side; as at Low Leyton, Leytonstone, Walthamstow, Woodford, Wanstead, and the towns of West Ham, Plaistow, Upton, etc. In all which places, or near them (as the inhabitants say), above a thousand new foundations have been erected, besides old houses repaired, all since the Revolution; and this is not to be forgotten too, that this increase is, generally speaking, of handsome, large houses, from 20 pounds a year to 60 pounds, very few under 20 pounds a year; being chiefly for the habitations of the richest citizens, such as either are able to keep two houses, one in the country and one in the city; or for such citizens as being rich, and having left off trade, live altogether in these neighbouring villages, for the pleasure and health of the latter part of their days.

The truth of this may at least appear, in that they tell me there are no less than two hundred coaches kept by the inhabitants within the circumference of these few villages named above, besides such as are kept by accidental lodgers.

This increase of the inhabitants, and the cause of it, I shall enlarge upon when I come to speak of the like in the counties of Middlesex, Surrey, &c, where it is the same, only in a much greater degree. But this I must take notice of here, that this increase causes those villages to be much pleasanter and more sociable than formerly, for now people go to them, not for retirement into the country, but for good company; of which, that I may speak to the ladies as well as other authors do, there are in these villages, nay, in all, three or four excepted, excellent conversation, and a great deal of it, and that without the mixture of assemblies, gaming-houses, and public foundations of vice and debauchery; and particularly I find none of those incentives kept up on this side the country.

Mr. Camden, and his learned continuator, Bishop Gibson, have ransacked this country for its antiquities, and have left little unsearched; and as it is not my present design to say much of what has been said already, I shall touch very lightly where two such excellent antiquaries have gone before me; except it be to add what may have been since discovered, which as to these parts is only this: That there seems to be lately found out in the bottom of the Marshes (generally called Hackney Marsh, and beginning near about the place now called the Wick, between Old Ford and the said Wick), the remains of a great stone causeway, which, as it is supposed, was the highway, or great road from London into Essex, and the same which goes now over the great bridge between Bow and Stratford.

That the great road lay this way, and that the great causeway landed again just over the river, where now the Temple Mills stand, and passed by Sir Thomas Hickes's house at Ruckolls, all this is not doubted; and that it was one of those famous highways made by the Romans there is undoubted proof, by the several marks of Roman work, and by Roman coins and other antiquities found there, some of which are said to be deposited in the hands of the Rev. Mr. Strype,

vicar of the parish of Low Leyton.

From hence the great road passed up to Leytonstone, a place by some known now as much by the sign of the "Green Man," formerly a lodge upon the edge of the forest; and crossing by Wanstead House, formerly the dwelling of Sir Josiah Child, now of his son the Lord Castlemain (of which hereafter), went over the same river which we now pass at Ilford; and passing that part of the great forest which we now call Hainault Forest, came into that which is now the great road, a little on this side the Whalebone, a place on the road so called because the rib-bone of a great whale, which was taken in the River Thames the same year that Oliver Cromwell died, 1658, was fixed there for a monument of that monstrous creature, it being at first about eight-and-twenty feet long.

According to my first intention of effectually viewing the sea-coast of these three counties, I went from Stratford to Barking, a large market-town, but chiefly inhabited by fishermen, whose smacks ride in the Thames, at the mouth of their river, from whence their fish is sent up to London to the market at Billingsgate by small boats, of which I shall speak by itself in my description of London.

One thing I cannot omit in the mention of these Barking fisher-smacks, viz., that one of those fishermen, a very substantial and experienced man, convinced me that all the pretences to bringing fish alive to London market from the North Seas, and other remote places on the coast of Great Britain, by the new-built sloops called fish-pools, have not been able to do anything but what their fishing-smacks are able on the same occasion to perform. These fishing-smacks are very useful vessels to the public upon many occasions; as particularly, in time of war they are used as press-smacks, running to all the northern and western coasts to pick up seamen to man the navy, when any expedition is at hand that requires a sudden equipment; at other times, being excellent sailors, they are tenders to particular men of war; and on an expedition they have been made use of as machines for the blowing up of fortified ports and havens; as at Calais, St. Malo, and other places.

This parish of Barking is very large, and by the improvement of lands taken in out of the Thames, and out of the river which runs by the town, the tithes, as the townsmen assured me, are worth above 600 pounds per annum, including, small tithes. Note.--This parish has two or three chapels of ease, viz., one at Ilford, and one on the side of Hainault Forest, called New Chapel.

Sir Thomas Fanshaw, of an ancient Roman Catholic family, has a very good estate in this parish. A little beyond the town, on the road to Dagenham, stood a great house, ancient, and now almost fallen down, where tradition says the Gunpowder Treason Plot was at first contrived, and that all the first consultations about it were held there.

This side of the county is rather rich in land than in inhabitants, occasioned chiefly by the unhealthiness of the air; for these low marsh grounds, which, with all the south side of the county, have

been saved out of the River Thames, and out of the sea, where the river is wide enough to be called so, begin here, or rather begin at West Ham, by Stratford, and continue to extend themselves, from hence eastward, growing wider and wider till we come beyond Tilbury, when the flat country lies six, seven, or eight miles broad, and is justly said to be both unhealthy and unpleasant.

However, the lands are rich, and, as is observable, it is very good farming in the marshes, because the landlords let good pennyworths, for it being a place where everybody cannot live, those that venture it will have encouragement and indeed it is but reasonable they should.

Several little observations I made in this part of the county of Essex.

1. We saw, passing from Barking to Dagenham, the famous breach, made by an inundation of the Thames, which was so great as that it laid near 5,000 acres of land under water, but which after near ten years lying under water, and being several times blown up, has been at last effectually stopped by the application of Captain Perry, the gentleman who, for several years, had been employed in the Czar of Muscovy's works, at Veronitza, on the River Don. This breach appeared now effectually made up, and they assured us that the new work, where the breach was, is by much esteemed the strongest of all the sea walls in that level.

2. It was observable that great part of the lands in these levels, especially those on this side East Tilbury, are held by the farmers, cow-keepers, and grazing butchers who live in and near London, and that they are generally stocked (all the winter half year) with large fat sheep, viz., Lincolnshire and Leicestershire wethers, which they buy in Smithfield in September and October, when the Lincolnshire and Leicestershire graziers sell off their stock, and are kept here till Christmas, or Candlemas, or thereabouts; and though they are not made at all fatter here than they were when bought in, yet the farmer or butcher finds very good advantage in it, by the difference of the price of mutton between Michaelmas, when it is cheapest, and Candlemas, when it is dearest; this is what the butchers value themselves upon, when they tell us at the market that it is right marsh-mutton.

3. In the bottom of these Marshes, and close to the edge of the river, stands the strong fortress of Tilbury, called Tilbury Fort, which may justly be looked upon as the key of the River Thames, and consequently the key of the City of London. It is a regular fortification. The design of it was a pentagon, but the water bastion, as it would have been called, was never built. The plan was laid out by Sir Martin Beckman, chief engineer to King Charles II., who also designed the works at Sheerness. The esplanade of the fort is very large, and the bastions the largest of any in England, the foundation is laid so deep, and piles under that, driven down two an end of one another, so far, till they were assured they were below the channel of the river, and that the piles, which were shed with iron, entered into the solid chalk rock adjoining to, or reaching from, the chalk hills on the other side. These bastions settled considerably at first, as did also part of

the curtain, the great quantity of earth that was brought to fill them up, necessarily, requiring to be made solid by time; but they are now firm as the rocks of chalk which they came from, and the filling up one of these bastions, as I have been told by good hands, cost the Government 6,000 pounds, being filled with chalk rubbish fetched from the chalk pits at Northfleet, just above Gravesend.

The work to the land side is complete; the bastions are faced with brick. There is a double ditch, or moat, the innermost part of which is 180 feet broad; there is a good counterscarp, and a covered way marked out with ravelins and tenailles, but they are not raised a second time after their first settling.

On the land side there are also two small redoubts of brick, but of very little strength, for the chief strength of this fort on the land side consists in this, that they are able to lay the whole level under water, and so to make it impossible for an enemy to make any approaches to the fort that way.

On the side next the river there is a very strong curtain, with a noble gate called the Water Gate in the middle, and the ditch is palisadoed. At the place where the water bastion was designed to be built, and which by the plan should run wholly out into the river, so to flank the two curtains of each side; I say, in the place where it should have been, stands a high tower, which they tell us was built in Queen Elizabeth's time, and was called the Block House; the side next the water is vacant.

Before this curtain, above and below the said vacancy, is a platform in the place of a counterscarp, on which are planted 106 pieces of cannon, generally all of them carrying from twenty-four to forty-six pound ball; a battery so terrible as well imports the consequence of that place; besides which, there are smaller pieces planted between, and the bastions and curtain also are planted with guns; so that they must be bold fellows who will venture in the biggest ships the world has heard of to pass such a battery, if the men appointed to serve the guns do their duty like stout fellows, as becomes them.

The present government of this important place is under the prudent administration of the Right Honourable the Lord Newbrugh.

From hence there is nothing for many miles together remarkable but a continued level of unhealthy marshes, called the Three Hundreds, till we come before Leigh, and to the mouth of the River Chelmer, and Blackwater. These rivers united make a large firth, or inlet of the sea, which by Mr. Camden is called Idumanum Fluvium; but by our fishermen and seamen, who use it as a port, it is called Malden Water.

In this inlet of the sea is Osey, or Osyth Island, commonly called Oosy Island, so well known by our London men of pleasure for the infinite number of wild fowl, that is to say, duck, mallard, teal, and widgeon, of which there are such vast flights, that they tell us the island, namely the creek, seems covered with them at certain times of the year, and they go from London on purpose for the

pleasure of shooting; and, indeed, often come home very well laden with game. But it must be remembered too that those gentlemen who are such lovers of the sport, and go so far for it, often return with an Essex ague on their backs, which they find a heavier load than the fowls they have shot.

It is on this shore, and near this creek, that the greatest quantity of fresh fish is caught which supplies not this country only, but London markets also. On the shore, beginning a little below Candy Island, or rather below Leigh Road, there lies a great shoal or sand called the Black Tail, which runs out near three leagues into the sea due east; at the end of it stands a pole or mast, set up by the Trinity House men of London, whose business is to lay buoys and set up sea marks for the direction of the sailors; this is called Shoe Beacon, from the point of land where this sand begins, which is called Shoeburyness, and that from the town of Shoebury, which stands by it. From this sand, and on the edge of Shoebury, before it, or south west of it, all along, to the mouth of Colchester water, the shore is full of shoals and sands, with some deep channels between; all which are so full of fish, that not only the Barking fishing-smacks come hither to fish, but the whole shore is full of small fisher-boats in very great numbers, belonging to the villages and towns on the coast, who come in every tide with what they take; and selling the smaller fish in the country, send the best and largest away upon horses, which go night and day to London market.

N.B.--I am the more particular in my remarks on this place, because in the course of my travels the reader will meet with the like in almost every place of note through the whole island, where it will be seen how this whole kingdom, as well the people as the land, and even the sea, in every part of it, are employed to furnish something, and I may add, the best of everything, to supply the City of London with provisions; I mean by provisions, corn, flesh, fish, butter, cheese, salt, fuel, timber, etc., and clothes also; with everything necessary for building, and furniture for their own use or for trade; of all which in their order.

On this shore also are taken the best and nicest, though not the largest, oysters in England; the spot from whence they have their common appellation is a little bank called Woelfleet, scarce to be called an island, in the mouth of the River Crouch, now called Crooksea Water; but the chief place where the said oysters are now had is from Wyvenhoe and the shores adjacent, whither they are brought by the fishermen, who take them at the mouth of that they call Colchester water and about the sand they call the Spits, and carry them up to Wyvenhoe, where they are laid in beds or pits on the shore to feed, as they call it; and then being barrelled up and carried to Colchester, which is but three miles off, they are sent to London by land, and are from thence called Colchester oysters.

The chief sort of other fish which they carry from this part of the shore to London are soles, which they take sometimes exceeding large, and yield a very good price at London market. Also sometimes middling turbot, with whiting, codling and large flounders; the small fish, as above, they sell in the country.

In the several creeks and openings, as above, on this shore there are also other islands, but of no particular note, except Mersey, which lies in the middle of the two openings between Malden Water and Colchester Water; being of the most difficult access, so that it is thought a thousand men well provided might keep possession of it against a great force, whether by land or sea. On this account, and because if possessed by an enemy it would shut up all the navigation and fishery on that side, the Government formerly built a fort on the south-east point of it; and generally in case of Dutch war, there is a strong body of troops kept there to defend it.

At this place may be said to end what we call the Hundreds of Essex--that is to say, the three Hundreds or divisions which include the marshy country, viz., Barnstable Hundred, Rochford Hundred, and Dengy Hundred.

I have one remark more before I leave this damp part of the world, and which I cannot omit on the women's account, namely, that I took notice of a strange decay of the sex here; insomuch that all along this country it was very frequent to meet with men that had had from five or six to fourteen or fifteen wives; nay, and some more. And I was informed that in the marshes on the other side of the river over against Candy Island there was a farmer who was then living with the five-and-twentieth wife, and that his son, who was but about thirty-five years old, had already had about fourteen. Indeed, this part of the story I only had by report, though from good hands too; but the other is well known and easy to be inquired into about Fobbing, Curringham, Thundersly, Benfleet, Prittlewell, Wakering, Great Stambridge, Cricksea, Burnham, Dengy, and other towns of the like situation. The reason, as a merry fellow told me, who said he had had about a dozen and a half of wives (though I found afterwards he fibbed a little) was this: That they being bred in the marshes themselves and seasoned to the place, did pretty well with it; but that they always went up into the hilly country, or, to speak their own language, into the uplands for a wife. That when they took the young lasses out of the wholesome and fresh air they were healthy, fresh, and clear, and well; but when they came out of their native air into the marshes among the fogs and damps, there they presently changed their complexion, got an ague or two, and seldom held it above half a year, or a year at most; "And then," said he, "we go to the uplands again and fetch another;" so that marrying of wives was reckoned a kind of good farm to them. It is true the fellow told this in a kind of drollery and mirth; but the fact, for all that, is certainly true; and that they have abundance of wives by that very means. Nor is it less true that the inhabitants in these places do not hold it out, as in other countries, and as first you seldom meet with very ancient people among the poor, as in other places we do, so, take it one with another, not one-half of the inhabitants are natives of the place; but such as from other countries or in other parts of this country settle here for the advantage of good farms; for which I appeal to any impartial inquiry, having myself examined into it critically in several places.

From the marshes and low grounds being not able to travel without many windings and indentures by reason of the creeks and waters, I

came up to the town of Malden, a noted market town situate at the conflux or joining of two principal rivers in this county, the Chelm or Chelmer, and the Blackwater, and where they enter into the sea. The channel, as I have noted, is called by the sailors Malden Water, and is navigable up to the town, where by that means is a great trade for carrying corn by water to London; the county of Essex being (especially on all that side) a great corn county.

When I have said this I think I have done Malden justice, and said all of it that there is to be said, unless I should run into the old story of its antiquity, and tell you it was a Roman colony in the time of Vespasian, and that it was called Camolodunum. How the Britons, under Queen Boadicea, in revenge for the Romans' ill-usage of her--for indeed they used her majesty ill--they stripped her naked and whipped her publicly through their streets for some affront she had given them. I say how for this she raised the Britons round the country, overpowered, and cut in pieces the Tenth Legion, killed above eighty thousand Romans, and destroyed the colony; but was afterwards overthrown in a great battle, and sixty thousand Britons slain. I say, unless I should enter into this story, I have nothing more to say of Malden, and, as for that story, it is so fully related by Mr. Camden in his history of the Romans in Britain at the beginning of his "Britannia," that I need only refer the reader to it, and go on with my journey.

Being obliged to come thus far into the uplands, as above, I made it my road to pass through Witham, a pleasant, well-situated market town, in which, and in its neighbourhood, there are as many gentlemen of good fortunes and families as I believe can be met with in so narrow a compass in any of the three counties of which I make this circuit.

In the town of Witham dwells the Lord Pasely, oldest son of the Earl of Abercorn of Ireland (a branch of the noble family of Hamilton, in Scotland). His lordship has a small, but a neat, well-built new house, and is finishing his gardens in such a manner as few in that part of England will exceed them.

Nearer Chelmsford, hard by Boreham, lives the Lord Viscount Barrington, who, though not born to the title, or estate, or name which he now possesses, had the honour to be twice made heir to the estates of gentlemen not at all related to him, at least, one of them, as is very much to his honour, mentioned in his patent of creation. His name was Shute, his father a linendraper in London, and served sheriff of the said city in very troublesome times. He changed the name of Shute for that of Barrington by an Act of Parliament obtained for that purpose, and had the dignity of a baron of the kingdom conferred on him by the favour of King George. His lordship is a Dissenter, and seems to love retirement. He was a member of Parliament for the town of Berwick-upon-Tweed.

On the other side of Witham, at Fauburn, an ancient mansion house, built by the Romans, lives Mr. Bullock, whose father married the daughter of that eminent citizen, Sir Josiah Child, of Wanstead, by whom she had three sons; the eldest enjoys the estate, which is considerable.

It is observable, that in this part of the country there are several very considerable estates, purchased and now enjoyed by citizens of London, merchants, and tradesmen, as Mr. Western, an iron merchant, near Kelendon; Mr. Cresnor, a wholesale grocer, who was, a little before he died, named for sheriff at Earl's Coln; Mr. Olemus, a merchant at Braintree; Mr. Westcomb, near Malden; Sir Thomas Webster at Copthall, near Waltham; and several others.

I mention this to observe how the present increase of wealth in the City of London spreads itself into the country, and plants families and fortunes, who in another age will equal the families of the ancient gentry, who perhaps were brought out. I shall take notice of this in a general head, and when I have run through all the counties, collect a list of the families of citizens and tradesmen thus established in the several counties, especially round London.

The product of all this part of the country is corn, as that of the marshy feeding grounds mentioned above is grass, where their chief business is breeding of calves, which I need not say are the best and fattest, and the largest veal in England, if not in the world; and, as an instance, I ate part of a veal or calf, fed by the late Sir Josiah Child at Wanstead, the loin of which weighed above thirty pounds, and the flesh exceeding white and fat.

From hence I went on to Colchester. The story of Kill-Dane, which is told of the town of Kelvedon, three miles from Witham, namely, that this is the place where the massacre of the Danes was begun by the women, and that therefore it was called Kill-Dane; I say of it, as we generally say of improbable news, it wants confirmation. The true name of the town is Kelvedon, and has been so for many hundred years. Neither does Mr. Camden, or any other writer I meet with worth naming, insist on this piece of empty tradition. The town is commonly called Keldon.

Colchester is an ancient corporation. The town is large, very populous, the streets fair and beautiful, and though it may not said to be finely built, yet there are abundance of very good and well-built houses in it. It still mourns in the ruins of a civil war; during which, or rather after the heat of the war was over, it suffered a severe siege, which, the garrison making a resolute defence, was turned into a blockade, in which the garrison and inhabitants also suffered the utmost extremity of hunger, and were at last obliged to surrender at discretion, when their two chief officers, Sir Charles Lucas and Sir George Lisle, were shot to death under the castle wall. The inhabitants had a tradition that no grass would grow upon the spot where the blood of those two gallant gentlemen was spilt, and they showed the place bare of grass for many years; but whether for this reason I will not affirm. The story is now dropped, and the grass, I suppose, grows there, as in other places.

However, the battered walls, the breaches in the turrets, and the ruined churches, still remain, except that the church of St. Mary (where they had the royal fort) is rebuilt; but the steeple, which was two-thirds battered down, because the besieged had a large culverin upon it that did much execution, remains still in that condition.

There is another church which bears the marks of those times, namely, on the south side of the town, in the way to the Hythe, of which more hereafter.

The lines of contravallation, with the forts built by the besiegers, and which surrounded the whole town, remain very visible in many places; but the chief of them are demolished.

The River Colne, which passes through this town, compasses it on the north and east sides, and served in those times for a complete defence on those sides. They have three bridges over it, one called North Bridge, at the north gate, by which the road leads into Suffolk; one called East Bridge, at the foot of the High Street, over which lies the road to Harwich, and one at the Hythe, as above.

The river is navigable within three miles of the town for ships of large burthen; a little lower it may receive even a royal navy; and up to that part called the Hythe, close to the houses, it is navigable for hoys and small barques. This Hythe is a long street, passing from west to east, on the south side of the town. At the west end of it, there is a small intermission of the buildings, but not much; and towards the river it is very populous (it may be called the Wapping of Colchester). There is one church in that part of the town, a large quay by the river, and a good custom-house.

The town may be said chiefly to subsist by the trade of making bays, which is known over most of the trading parts of Europe by the name of Colchester Bays, though indeed all the towns round carry on the same trade--namely, Kelvedon, Witham, Coggeshall, Braintree, Bocking, &c., and the whole county, large as it is, may be said to be employed, and in part maintained, by the spinning of wool for the bay trade of Colchester and its adjacent towns. The account of the siege, A.D. 1648, with a diary of the most remarkable passages, are as follows, which I had from so good a hand as that I have no reason to question its being a true relation.

A Diary: Or, An Account Of The Siege And Blockade Of Colchester, A.D. 1648.

On the 4th of June, we were alarmed in the town of Colchester that the Lord Goring, the Lord Capel, and a body of two thousand of the loyal party, who had been in arms in Kent, having left a great body of an army in possession of Rochester Bridge, where they resolved to fight the Lord Fairfax and the Parliament army, had given the said General Fairfax the slip, and having passed the Thames at Greenwich, were come to Stratford, and were advancing this way; upon which news, Sir Charles Lucas, Sir George Lisle, Colonel Cook, and several gentlemen of the loyal army, and all that had commissions from the king, with a gallant appearance of gentlemen

volunteers, drew together from all parts of the country to join with them.

The 8th, we were further informed that they were advanced to Chelmsford, to New Hall House, and to Witham; and the 9th some of the horse arrived in the town, taking possession of the gates, and having engineers with them, told us that General Goring had resolved to make this town his headquarters, and would cause it to be well fortified. They also caused the drums to beat for volunteers; and a good number of the poor bay-weavers, and such-like people, wanting employment, enlisted; so that they completed Sir Charles Lucas's regiment, which was but thin, to near eight hundred men.

On the 10th we had news that the Lord Fairfax, having beaten the Royalists at Maidstone, and retaken Rochester, had passed the Thames at Gravesend, though with great difficulty, and with some loss, and was come to Horndon-on-the-Hill, in order to gain Colchester before the Royalists; but that hearing Sir Charles Lucas had prevented him, had ordered his rendezvous at Billerecay, and intended to possess the pass at Malden on the 11th, where Sir Thomas Honnywood, with the county-trained bands, was to be the same day.

The same evening the Lord Goring, with all his forces, making about five thousand six hundred men, horse and foot, came to Colchester, and encamping without the suburbs, under command of the cannon of St. Mary's fort, made disposition to fight the Parliament forces if they came up.

The 12th, the Lord Goring came into Colchester, viewed the fort in St. Mary's churchyard, ordered more cannon to be planted upon it, posted two regiments in the suburbs without the head gate, let the town know he would take them into his Majesty's protection, and that he would fight the enemy in that situation. The same evening the Lord Fairfax, with a strong party of one thousand horse, came to Lexden, at two small miles' distance, expecting the rest of his army there the same night.

The Lord Goring brought in prisoners the same day, Sir William Masham, and several other gentlemen of the county, who were secured under a strong guard; which the Parliament hearing, ordered twenty prisoners of the royal party to be singled out, declaring, that they should be used in the same manner as the Lord Goring used Sir William Masham, and the gentlemen prisoners with him.

On the 13th, early in the morning, our spies brought intelligence that the Lord Fairfax, all his forces being come up to him, was making dispositions for a march, resolving to attack the Royalists in their camp; upon which, the Lord Goring drew all his forces together, resolving to fight. The engineers had offered the night before to entrench his camp, and to draw a line round it in one night's time, but his lordship declined it, and now there was no time for it; whereupon the general, Lord Goring, drew up his army in order of battle on both sides the road, the horse in the open fields on the wings; the foot were drawn up, one regiment in the road, one regiment on each side, and two regiments for reserve in

the suburb, just at the entrance of the town, with a regiment of volunteers advanced as a forlorn hope, and a regiment of horse at the head-gate, ready to support the reserve, as occasion should require.

About nine in the morning we heard the enemy's drums beat a march, and in half an hour more their first troops appeared on the higher grounds towards Lexden. Immediately the cannon from St. Mary's fired upon them, and put some troops of horse into confusion, doing great execution, which, they not being able to shun it, made them quicken their pace, fall on, when our cannon were obliged to cease firing, lest we should hurt our own troops as well as the enemy. Soon after, their foot appeared, and our cannon saluted them in like manner, and killed them a great many men.

Their first line of foot was led up by Colonel Barkstead, and consisted of three regiments of foot, making about 1,700 men, and these charged our regiment in the lane, commanded by Sir George Lisle and Sir William Campion. They fell on with great fury, and were received with as much gallantry, and three times repulsed; nor could they break in here, though the Lord Fairfax sent fresh men to support them, till the Royalists' horse, oppressed with numbers on the left, were obliged to retire, and at last to come full gallop into the street, and so on into the town. Nay, still the foot stood firm, and the volunteers, being all gentlemen, kept their ground with the greatest resolution; but the left wing being routed, as above, Sir William Campion was obliged to make a front to the left, and lining the hedge with his musketeers, made a stand with a body of pikes against the enemy's horse, and prevented them entering the lane. Here that gallant gentleman was killed with a carbine shot; and after a very gallant resistance, the horse on the right being also overpowered, the word was given to retreat, which, however, was done in such good order, the regiments of reserve standing drawn up at the end of the street, ready to receive the enemy's horse upon the points of their pikes, that the royal troops came on in the openings between the regiments, and entered the town with very little loss, and in very good order.

By this, however, those regiments of reserve were brought at last to sustain the efforts of the enemy's whole army, till being overpowered by numbers they were put into disorder, and forced to get into the town in the best manner they could; by which means near two hundred men were killed or made prisoners.

Encouraged by this success the enemy pushed on, supposing they should enter the town pell-mell with the rest; nor did the Royalists hinder them, but let good part of Barkstead's own regiment enter the head-gate; but then sallying from St. Mary's with a choice body of foot on their left, and the horse rallying in the High Street, and charging them again in the front, they were driven back quite into the street of the suburb, and most of those that had so rashly entered were cut in pieces.

Thus they were repulsed at the south entrance into the town; and though they attempted to storm three times after that with great resolution, yet they were as often beaten back, and that with great havoc of their men; and the cannon from the fort all the while did

execution upon those who stood drawn up to support them; so that at last, seeing no good to be done, they retreated, having small joy of their pretended victory.

They lost in this action Colonel Needham, who commanded a regiment called the Tower Guards, and who fought very desperately; Captain Cox, an old experienced horse officer, and several other officers of note, with a great many private men, though, as they had the field, they concealed their number, giving out that they lost but a hundred, when we were assured they lost near a thousand men besides the wounded.

They took some of our men prisoners, occasioned by the regiment of Colonel Farr, and two more sustaining the shock of their whole army, to secure the retreat of the main body, as above.

The 14th, the Lord Fairfax finding he was not able to carry the town by storm, without the formality of a siege, took his headquarters at Lexden, and sent to London and to Suffolk for more forces; also he ordered the trained bands to be raised and posted on the roads to prevent succours. Notwithstanding which, divers gentlemen, with some assistance of men and arms, found means to get into the town.

The very same night they began to break ground, and particularly to raise a fort between Colchester and Lexden, to cover the general's quarter from the sallies from the town; for the Royalists having a good body of horse, gave them no rest, but scoured the fields every day, and falling all that were found straggling from their posts, and by this means killed a great many.

The 17th, Sir Charles Lucas having been out with 1,200 horse, and detaching parties toward the seaside, and towards Harwich, they brought in a very great quantity of provisions, and abundance of sheep and black cattle sufficient for the supply of the town for a considerable time; and had not the Suffolk forces advanced over Cataway Bridge to prevent it, a larger supply had been brought in that way; for now it appeared plainly that the Lord Fairfax finding the garrison strong and resolute, and that he was not in a condition to reduce them by force, at least without the loss of much blood, had resolved to turn his siege into a blockade, and reduce them by hunger; their troops being also wanted to oppose several other parties, who had, in several parts of the kingdom, taken arms for the king's cause.

This same day General Fairfax sent in a trumpet to propose exchanging prisoners, which the Lord Goring rejected, expecting a reinforcement of troops, which were actually coming to him, and were to be at Linton in Cambridgeshire as the next day.

The same day two ships brought in a quantity of corn and provisions and fifty-six men from the shore of Kent with several gentlemen, who all landed and came up to the town, and the greatest part of the corn was with the utmost application unloaded the same night into some hoyes, which brought it up to the Hythe, being apprehensive of the Parliament's ships which lay at Harwich, who having intelligence of the said ships, came the next day into the

mouth of the river, and took the said two ships and what corn was left in them. The besieged sent out a party to help the ships, but having no boats they could not assist them.

18th. Sir Charles Lucas sent an answer about exchange of prisoners, accepting the conditions offered, but the Parliament's general returned that he would not treat with Sir Charles, for that he (Sir Charles) being his prisoner upon his parole of honour, and having appeared in arms contrary to the rules of war, had forfeited his honour and faith, and was not capable of command or trust in martial affairs. To this Sir Charles sent back an answer, and his excuse for his breach of his parole, but it was not accepted, nor would the Lord Fairfax enter upon any treaty with him.

Upon this second message Sir William Masham and the Parliament Committee and other gentlemen, who were prisoners in the town, sent a message in writing under their hands to the Lord Fairfax, entreating him to enter into a treaty for peace; but the Lord Fairfax returned, he could take no notice of their request, as supposing it forced from them under restraint; but that if the Lord Goring desired peace, he might write to the Parliament, and he would cause his messenger to have a safe conduct to carry his letter. There was a paper sent enclosed in this paper, signed Capel, Norwich, Charles Lucas, but to that the general would return no answer, because it was signed by Sir Charles for the reasons above.

All this while the Lord Goring, finding the enemy strengthening themselves, gave order for fortifying the town, and drawing lines in several places to secure the entrance, as particularly without the east bridge, and without the north gate and bridge, and to plant more cannon upon the works; to which end some great guns were brought in from some ships at Wivenhoe.

The same day, our men sallied out in three places, and attacked the besiegers, first at their port, called Essex, then at their new works, on the south of the town; a third party sallying at the east bridge, brought in some booty from the Suffolk troops, having killed several of their stragglers on the Harwich road. They also took a lieutenant of horse prisoner, and brought him into the town.

19th. This day we had the unwelcome news that our friends at Linton were defeated by the enemy, and Major Muschamp, a loyal gentleman, killed.

The same night, our men gave the enemy alarm at their new Essex fort, and thereby drew them out as if they would fight, till they brought them within reach of the cannon of St. Mary's, and then our men retiring, the great guns let fly among them, and made them run. Our men shouted after them. Several of them were killed on this occasion, one shot having killed three horsemen in our fight.

20th. We now found the enemy, in order to a perfect blockade, resolved to draw a line of circumvallation round the town; having received a train of forty pieces of heavy cannon from the Tower of London.

This day the Parliament sent a messenger to their prisoners to know how they fared, and how they were used; who returned word, that they fared indifferent well, and were very civilly used, but that provisions were scarce, and therefore dear.

This day a party of horse, with 300 foot, sallied out, and marched as far as the fort on the Isle of Mersey, which they made a show of attacking, to keep in the garrison. Meanwhile the rest took a good number of cattle from the country, which they brought safe into the town, with five waggons laden with corn. This was the last they could bring in that way, the lines being soon finished on that side.

This day the Lord Fairfax sent in a trumpet to the Earl of Norwich and the Lord Goring, offering honourable conditions to them all, allowing all the gentlemen their lives and arms, exemption from plunder, and passes, if they desired to go beyond sea, and all the private men pardon, and leave to go peaceably to their own dwellings. But the Lord Goring and the rest of the gentlemen rejected it, and laughed at them, upon which the Lord Fairfax made proclamation, that his men should give the private soldiers in Colchester free leave to pass through their camp, and go where they pleased without molestation, only leaving their arms, but that the gentlemen should have no quarter. This was a great loss to the Royalists, for now the men foreseeing the great hardships they were like to suffer, began to slip away, and the Lord Goring was obliged to forbid any to desert on pain of present death, and to keep parties of horse continually patrolling to prevent them; notwithstanding which many got away.

21st. The town desired the Lord Goring to give them leave to send a message to Lord Fairfax, to desire they might have liberty to carry on their trade and sell their bays and says, which Lord Goring granted; but the enemy's general returned, that they should have considered that before they let the Royalists into the town; that to desire a free trade from a town besieged was never heard of, or at least, was such a motion, as was never yet granted; that, however, he would give the bay-makers leave to bring their bays and says, and other goods, once a week, or oftener, if they desire it, to Lexden Heath, where they should have a free market, and might sell them or carry them back again, if not sold, as they found occasion.

22nd. The besieged sallied out in the night with a strong party, and disturbed the enemy in their works, and partly ruined one of their forts, called Ewer's Fort, where the besiegers were laying a bridge over the River Colne. Also they sallied again at east bridge, and faced the Suffolk troops, who were now declared enemies. These brought in six-and-fifty good bullocks, and some cows, and they took and killed several of the enemy.

23rd. The besiegers began to fire with their cannon from Essex Fort, and from Barkstead's Fort, which was built upon the Malden road; and finding that the besieged had a party in Sir Harbottle Grimston's house, called, "The Fryery," they fired at it with their cannon, and battered it almost down, and then the soldiers set it on fire.

This day upon the townsmen's treaty for the freedom of the bay trade, the Lord Fairfax sent a second offer of conditions to the besieged, being the same as before, only excepting Lord Goring, Lord Capel, Sir George Lisle, and Sir Charles Lucas.

This day we had news in the town that the Suffolk forces were advanced to assist the besiegers, and that they began a fort called Fort Suffolk, on the north side of the town, to shut up the Suffolk road towards Stratford. This day the besieged sallied out at north bridge, attacked the out-guards of the Suffolk men on Mile End Heath, and drove them into their fort in the woods.

This day the Lord Fairfax sent a trumpet, complaining of chewed and poisoned bullets being shot from the town, and threatening to give no quarter if that practice was allowed; but Lord Goring returned answer, with a protestation, that no such thing was done by his order or consent.

24th. They fired hard from their cannon against St. Mary's steeple, on which was planted a large culverin, which annoyed them even in the general's headquarters at Lexden. One of the best gunners the garrison had was killed with a cannon bullet. This night the besieged sallied towards Audly, on the Suffolk road, and brought in some cattle.

25th. Lord Capel sent a trumpet to the Parliament-General, but the rogue ran away, and came not back, nor sent any answer; whether they received his message or not, was not known.

26th. This day having finished their new bridge, a party of their troops passed that bridge, and took post on the hill over against Mile End Church, where they built a fort, called Fothergall's Fort, and another on the east side of the road, called Rainsbro's Fort, so that the town was entirely shut in, on that side, and the Royalists had no place free but over east bridge, which was afterwards cut off by the enemy's bringing their line from the Hythe within the river to the stone causeway leading to the east bridge.

July 1st. From the 26th to the 1st, the besiegers continued finishing their works, and by the 2nd the whole town was shut in; at which the besiegers gave a general salvo from their cannon at all their forts; but the besieged gave them a return, for they sallied out in the night, attacked Barkstead's fort, scarce finished, with such fury, that they twice entered the work sword in hand, killed most part of the defendants, and spoiled part of the forts cast up; but fresh forces coming up, they retired with little loss, bringing eight prisoners, and having slain, as they reported, above 100.

On the second, Lord Fairfax offered exchange for Sir William Masham in particular, and afterwards for other prisoners, but the Lord Goring refused.

5th. The besieged sallied with two regiments, supported by some horse, at midnight; they were commanded by Sir George Lisle. They

fell on with such fury, that the enemy were put into confusion, their works at east bridge ruined, and two pieces of cannon taken, Lieutenant Colonel Sambrook, and several other officers, were killed, and our men retired into the town, bringing the captain, two lieutenants, and about fifty men with them prisoners into the town; but having no horse, we could not bring off the cannon, but they spiked them, and made them unfit for service.

From this time to the 11th, the besieged sallied almost every night, being encouraged by their successes, and they constantly cut off some of the enemy, but not without loss also on their own side.

About this time we received by a spy the bad news of defeating the king's friends almost in all parts of England, and particularly several parties which had good wishes to our gentlemen, and intended to relieve them.

Our batteries from St. Mary's Fort and steeple, and from the north bridge, greatly annoyed them, and killed most of their gunners and firemen. One of the messengers who brought news to Lord Fairfax of the defeat of one of the parties, in Kent, and the taking of Weymer Castle, slipped into the town, and brought a letter to the Lord Goring, and listed in the regiment of the Lord Capel's horse.

14th. The besiegers attacked and took the Hythe Church, with a small work the besieged had there, but the defenders retired in time; some were taken prisoners in the church, but not in the fort; Sir Charles Lucas's horse was attacked by a great body of the besiegers; the besieged defended themselves with good resolution for some time, but a hand-grenade thrown in by the assailants, having fired the magazine, the house was blown up, and most of the gallant defenders buried in the ruins. This was a great blow to the Royalists, for it was a very strong pass, and always well guarded.

15th. The Lord Fairfax sent offers of honourable conditions to the soldiers of the garrison if they would surrender, or quit the service; upon which the Lords Goring and Capel, and Sir Charles Lucas, returned an answer signed by their hands, that it was not honourable or agreeable to the usage of war to offer conditions separately to the soldiers, exclusive of their officers, and therefore civilly desired his lordship to send no more such messages or proposals, or if he did, that he would not take it ill if they hanged up the messenger.

This evening all the gentlemen volunteers, with all the horse of the garrison, with Sir Charles Lucas, Sir George Lisle, and Sir Bernard Gascoigne at the head of them, resolved to break through the enemy, and forcing a pass to advance into Suffolk by Nayland Bridge. To this purpose they passed the river near Middle Mill; but their guides having misled them the enemy took the alarm; upon which their guides, and some pioneers which they had with them to open the hedges and level the banks, for their passing to Boxted, all ran away, so the horse were obliged to retreat, the enemy pretending to pursue, but thinking they had retreated by the north bridge, they missed them; upon which being enraged, they fired the suburbs without the bridge, and burned them quite down.

18th. Some of the horse attempted to escape the same way, and had the whole body been there as before, they had effected it; but there being but two troops, they were obliged to retire. Now the town began to be greatly distressed, provisions failing, and the townspeople, which were numerous, being very uneasy, and no way of breaking through being found practicable, the gentlemen would have joined in any attempt wherein they might die gallantly with their swords in their hands, but nothing presented; they often sallied and cut off many of the enemy, but their numbers were continually supplied, and the besieged diminished; their horse also sunk and became unfit for service, having very little hay, and no corn, and at length they were forced to kill them for food; so that they began to be in a very miserable condition, and the soldiers deserted every day in great numbers, not being able to bear the want of food, as being almost starved with hunger.

22nd. The Lord Fairfax offered again an exchange of prisoners, but the Lord Goring rejected it, because they refused conditions to the chief gentlemen of the garrison.

During this time, two troops of the Royal Horse sallied out in the night, resolving to break out or die: the first rode up full gallop to the enemy's horse guards on the side of Malden road, and exchanged their pistols with the advanced troops, and wheeling made as if they would retire to the town; but finding they were not immediately pursued, they wheeled about to the right, and passing another guard at a distance, without being perfectly discovered, they went clean off, and passing towards Tiptree Heath, and having good guides, they made their escape towards Cambridgeshire, in which length of way they found means to disperse without being attacked, and went every man his own way as fate directed; nor did we hear that many of them were taken: they were led, as we are informed, by Sir Bernard Gascoigne.

Upon these attempts of the horse to break out, the enemy built a small fort in the meadow right against the ford in the river at the Middle Mill, and once set that mill on fire, but it was extinguished without much damage; however, the fort prevented any more attempts that way.

22nd. The Parliament-General sent in a trumpet, to propose again the exchange of prisoners, offering the Lord Capel's son for one, and Mr. Ashburnham for Sir William Masham; but the Lord Capel, Lord Goring, and the rest of the loyal gentlemen rejected it; and Lord Capel, in particular, sent the Lord Fairfax word it was inhuman to surprise his son, who was not in arms, and offer him to insult a father's affection, but that he might murder his son if he pleased, he would leave his blood to be revenged as Heaven should give opportunity; and the Lord Goring sent word, that as they had reduced the king's servants to eat horseflesh, the prisoners should feed as they fed.

The enemy sent again to complain of the Royalists shooting poisoned bullets, and sent two affidavits of it made by two deserters, swearing it was done by the Lord Norwich's direction; the generals in the town returned under all their hands that they never gave any

such command or direction; that they disowned the practice; and that the fellows who swore it were perjured before in running from their colours and the service of their king, and ought not to be credited again; but they added, that for shooting rough-cast slugs they must excuse them, as things stood with them at that time.

About this time, a porter in a soldier's habit got through the enemy's leaguer, and passing their out-guards in the dark, got into the town, and brought letters from London, assuring the Royalists that there were so many strong parties up in arms for the king, and in so many places, that they would be very suddenly relieved. This they caused to be read to the soldiers to encourage them; and particularly it related to the rising of the Earl of Holland, and the Duke of Buckingham, who with 500 horse were gotten together in arms about Kingston in Surrey; but we had notice in a few days after that they were defeated, and the Earl of Holland taken, who was afterwards beheaded.

26th. The enemy now began to batter the walls, and especially on the west side, from St. Mary's towards the north gate; and we were assured they intended a storm; on which the engineers were directed to make trenches behind the walls where the breaches should be made, that in case of a storm they might meet with a warm reception. Upon this, they gave over the design of storming. The Lord Goring finding that the enemy had set the suburbs on fire right against the Hythe, ordered the remaining houses, which were empty of inhabitants, from whence their musketeer fired against the town, to be burned also.

31st. A body of foot sallied out at midnight, to discover what the enemy were doing at a place where they thought a new fort raising; they fell in among the workmen, and put them to flight, cut in pieces several of the guard, and brought in the officer who commanded them prisoner.

August 2nd. The town was now in a miserable condition: the soldiers searched and rifled the houses of the inhabitants for victuals; they had lived on horseflesh several weeks, and most of that also was as lean as carrion, which not being well salted bred wens; and this want of diet made the soldiers sickly, and many died of fluxes, yet they boldly rejected all offers of surrender, unless with safety to their offices. However, several hundreds got out, and either passed the enemy's guards, or surrendered to them and took passes.

7th. The townspeople became very uneasy to the soldiers, and the mayor of the town, with the aldermen, waited upon the general, desiring leave to send to the Lord Fairfax for leave to all the inhabitants to come out of the town, that they might not perish, to which the Lord Goring consented, but the Lord Fairfax refused them.

12th. The rabble got together in a vast crowd about the Lord Goring's quarters, clamouring for a surrender, and they did this every evening, bringing women and children, who lay howling and crying on the ground for bread; the soldiers beat off the men, but the women and children would not stir, bidding the soldiers kill them, saying they had rather be shot than be starved.

16th. The general, moved by the cries and distress of the poor inhabitants, sent out a trumpet to the Parliament-General, demanding leave to send to the Prince, who was with a fleet of nineteen men of war in the mouth of the Thames, offering to surrender, if they were not relieved in twenty days. The Lord Fairfax refused it, and sent them word he would be in the town in person, and visit them in less than twenty days, intimating that they were preparing for a storm. Some tart messages and answers were exchanged on this occasion. The Lord Goring sent word they were willing, in compassion to the poor townspeople, and to save that effusion of blood, to surrender upon honourable terms, but that as for the storming them, which was threatened, they might come on when they thought fit, for that they (the Royalists) were ready for them. This held to the 19th.

20th. The Lord Fairfax returned what he said was his last answer, and should be the last offer of mercy. The conditions offered were, that upon a peaceable surrender, all soldiers and officers under the degree of a captain in commission should have their lives, be exempted from plunder, and have passes to go to their respective dwellings. All the captains and superior officers, with all the lords and gentlemen, as well in commission as volunteers, to surrender prisoners at discretion, only that they should not be plundered by the soldiers.

21st. The generals rejected those offers; and when the people came about them again for bread, set open one of the gates, and bid them go out to the enemy, which a great many did willingly; upon which the Lord Goring ordered all the rest that came about his door to be turned out after them. But when the people came to the Lord Fairfax's camp the out-guards were ordered to fire at them and drive them all back again to the gate, which the Lord Goring seeing, he ordered them to be received in again. And now, although the generals and soldiers also were resolute to die with their swords in their hands rather than yield, and had maturely resolved to abide a storm, yet the Mayor and Aldermen having petitioned them as well as the inhabitants, being wearied with the importunities of the distressed people, and pitying the deplorable condition they were reduced to, they agreed to enter upon a treaty, and accordingly sent out some officers to the Lord Fairfax, the Parliament-General, to treat, and with them was sent two gentlemen of the prisoners upon their parole to return.

Upon the return of the said messengers with the Lord Fairfax's terms, the Lord Goring, &c., sent out a letter declaring they would die with their swords in their hands rather than yield without quarter for life, and sent a paper of articles on which they were willing to surrender. But in the very interim of this treaty news came that the Scots army, under Duke Hamilton, which was entered into Lancashire, and was joined by the Royalists in that country, making 21,000 men, were entirely defeated. After this the Lord Fairfax would not grant any abatement of articles--viz., to have all above lieutenants surrender at mercy.

Upon this the Lord Goring and the General refused to submit again, and proposed a general sally, and to break through or die, but

found upon preparing for it that the soldiers, who had their lives offered them, declined it, fearing the gentlemen would escape, and they should be left to the mercy of the Parliament soldiers; and that upon this they began to mutiny and talk of surrendering the town and their officers too. Things being brought to this pass, the Lords and General laid aside that design, and found themselves obliged to submit; and so the town was surrendered the 28th of August, 1648, upon conditions as follows:-

The Lords and gentlemen all prisoners at mercy.

The common soldiers had passes to go home to their several dwellings, but without arms, and an oath not to serve against the Parliament.

The town to be preserved from pillage, paying 14,000 pounds ready money.

The same day a council of war being called about the prisoners of war, it was resolved that the Lords should be left to the disposal of the Parliament. That Sir Charles Lucas, Sir George Lisle, and Sir Marmaduke Gascoigne should be shot to death, and the other officers prisoners to remain in custody till further order.

The two first of the three gentlemen were shot to death, and the third respite. Thus ended the siege of Colchester.

N.B.--Notwithstanding the number killed in the siege, and dead of the flux, and other distempers occasioned by bad diet, which were very many, and notwithstanding the number which deserted and escaped in the time of their hardships, yet there remained at the time of the surrender:

Earl of Norwich (Goring).

Lord Capell.

Lord Loughbro'.

11 Knights.

9 Colonels.

8 Lieut.-Colonels.

9 Majors.

30 Captains.

72 Lieutenants.

69 Ensigns.

183 Serjeants and Corporals.

3,067 Private Soldiers.

65 Servants to the Lords and General Officers and Gentlemen.

3,526 in all.

The town of Colchester has been supposed to contain about 40,000 people, including the out-villages which are within its liberty, of which there are a great many--the liberty of the town being of a great extent. One sad testimony of the town being so populous is that they buried upwards of 5,259 people in the plague year, 1665. But the town was severely visited indeed, even more in proportion

than any of its neighbours, or than the City of London.

The government of the town is by a mayor, high steward, a recorder or his deputy, eleven aldermen, a chamberlain, a town clerk, assistants, and eighteen common councilmen. Their high steward (this year, 1722) is Sir Isaac Rebow, a gentleman of a good family and known character, who has generally for above thirty years been one of their representatives in Parliament. He has a very good house at the entrance in at the south, or head gate of the town, where he has had the honour several times to lodge and entertain the late King William of glorious memory in his returning from Holland by way of Harwich to London. Their recorder is Earl Cowper, who has been twice Lord High Chancellor of England. But his lordship not residing in those parts has put in for his deputy,--Price, Esq., barrister-at-law, and who dwells in the town. There are in Colchester eight churches besides those which are damaged, and five meeting-houses, whereof two for Quakers, besides a Dutch church and a French church.

Public Edifices are -

1. Bay Hall, an ancient society kept up for ascertaining the manufacture of bays, which are, or ought to be, all brought to this hall to be viewed and sealed according to their goodness by the masters; and to this practice has been owing the great reputation of the Colchester bays in foreign markets, where to open the side of a bale and show the seal has been enough to give the buyer a character of the value of the goods without any further search; and so far as they abate the integrity and exactness of their method, which I am told of late is much omitted; I say, so far, that reputation will certainly abate in the markets they go to, which are principally in Portugal and Italy. This corporation is governed by a particular set of men who are called governors of the Dutch Bay Hall. And in the same building is the Dutch church.
2. The guildhall of the town, called by them the moot hall, to which is annexed the town gaol.
3. The workhouse, being lately enlarged, and to which belongs a corporation or a body of the inhabitants, consisting of sixty persons incorporated by Act of Parliament Anno 1698 for taking care of the poor. They are incorporated by the name and title of the governor, deputy governor, assistants, and guardians of the poor of the town of Colchester. They are in number eight-and-forty, to whom are added the mayor and aldermen for the time being, who are always guardians by the same charter. These make the number of sixty, as above. There is also a grammar free-school, with a good allowance to the master, who is chosen by the town.
4. The castle of Colchester is now become only a monument showing the antiquity of the place, it being built as the walls of the town also are, with Roman bricks, and the Roman coins dug up here, and ploughed up in the fields adjoining, confirm it. The inhabitants boast much that Helena, the mother of Constantine the Great, first Christian Emperor of the Romans, was born there, and it may be so

for aught we know. I only observe what Mr. Camden says of the Castle of Colchester, viz.: In the middle of this city stands a castle ready to fall with age.

Though this castle has stood one hundred and twenty years from the time Mr. Camden wrote that account, and it is not fallen yet, nor will another hundred and twenty years, I believe, make it look one jot the older. And it was observable that in the late siege of this town, a common shot, which the besiegers made at this old castle, were so far from making it fall, that they made little or no impression upon it; for which reason, it seems, and because the garrison made no great use of it against the besiegers, they fired no more at it.

There are two charity schools set up here, and carried on by a generous subscription, with very good success.

The title of Colchester is in the family of Earl Rivers, and the eldest son of that family is called Lord Colchester, though as I understand, the title is not settled by the creation to the eldest son till he enjoys the title of earl with it, but that the other is by the courtesy of England; however, this I take ad referendum.

From Colchester I took another step down to the coast; the land running out a great way into the sea, south and south-east makes that promontory of land called the Naze, and well known to seamen using the northern trade. Here one sees a sea open as an ocean without any opposite shore, though it be no more than the mouth of the Thames. This point called the Naze, and the north-east point of Kent, near Margate, called the North Foreland, making what they call the mouth of the river and the port of London, though it be here above sixty miles over.

At Walton-under-the-Naze they find on the shore copperas-stone in great quantities; and there are several large works called copperas houses, where they make it with great expense.

On this promontory is a new mark erected by the Trinity House men, and at the public expense, being a round brick tower, near eighty feet high. The sea gains so much upon the land here by the continual winds at south-west, that within the memory of some of the inhabitants there they have lost above thirty acres of land in one place.

From hence we go back into the county about four miles, because of the creeks which lie between; and then turning east again come to Harwich, on the utmost eastern point of this large country.

Harwich is a town so well known and so perfectly described by many writers, I need say little of it. It is strong by situation, and may be made more so by art. But it is many years since the Government of England have had any occasion to fortify towns to the landward; it is enough that the harbour or road, which is one of the best and securest in England, is covered at the entrance by a strong fort and a battery of guns to the seaward, just as at Tilbury, and which sufficiently defend the mouth of the river. And there is a particular felicity in this fortification, viz., that

though the entrance or opening of the river into the sea is very wide, especially at high-water, at least two miles, if not three over; yet the Channel, which is deep, and in which the ships must keep and come to the harbour, is narrow, and lies only on the side of the fort, so that all the ships which come in or go out must come close under the guns of the fort--that is to say, under the command of their shot.

The fort is on the Suffolk side of the bay or entrance, but stands so far into the sea upon the point of a sand or shoal, which runs out toward the Essex side, as it were, laps over the mouth of that haven like a blind to it; and our surveyors of the country affirm it to be in the county of Essex. The making this place, which was formerly no other than a sand in the sea, solid enough for the foundation of so good a fortification, has not been done but by many years' labour, often repairs, and an infinite expense of money, but it is now so firm that nothing of storms and high tides, or such things as make the sea dangerous to these kind of works, can affect it.

The harbour is of a vast extent; for, as two rivers empty themselves here, viz., Stour from Manningtree and the Orwell from Ipswich, the channels of both are large and deep; and safe for all weathers; so where they join they make a large bay or road able to receive the biggest ships, and the greatest number that ever the world saw together; I mean ships of war. In the old Dutch war great use has been made of this harbour; and I have known that there has been one hundred sail of men-of-war and their attendants and between three and four hundred sail of collier ships all in this harbour at a time, and yet none of them crowding or riding in danger of one another.

Harwich is known for being the port where the packet boats, between England and Holland, go out and come in. The inhabitants are far from being famed for good usage to strangers, but, on the contrary, are blamed for being extravagant in their reckonings in the public-houses, which has not a little encouraged the setting up of sloops, which they now call passage boats, to Holland, to go directly from the River Thames; this, though it may be something the longer passage, yet as they are said to be more obliging to passengers and more reasonable in the expense, and, as some say, also, the vessels are better sea boats, has been the reason why so many passengers do not go or come by the way of Harwich as formerly were wont to do; insomuch that the stage coaches between this place and London, which ordinarily went twice or three times a week, are now entirely laid down, and the passengers are left to hire coaches on purpose, take post-horses, or hire horses to Colchester, as they find most convenient.

The account of a petrifying quality in the earth here, though some will have it to be in the water of a spring hard by, is very strange. They boast that their town is walled and their streets paved with clay, and yet that one is as strong and the other as clean as those that are built or paved with stone. The fact is indeed true, for there is a sort of clay in the cliff, between the town and the Beacon Hill adjoining, which, when it falls down into the sea, where it is beaten with the waves and the weather, turns

gradually into stone. But the chief reason assigned is from the water of a certain spring or well, which, rising in the said cliff, runs down into the sea among those pieces of clay, and petrifies them as it runs; and the force of the sea often stirring, and perhaps turning, the lumps of clay, when storms of wind may give force enough to the water, causes them to harden everywhere alike; otherwise those which were not quite sunk in the water of the spring would be petrified but in part. These stones are gathered up to pave the streets and build the houses, and are indeed very hard. It is also remarkable that some of them taken up before they are thoroughly petrified will, upon breaking them, appear to be hard as a stone without and soft as clay in the middle; whereas others that have lain a due time shall be thorough stone to the centre, and as exceeding hard within as without. The same spring is said to turn wood into iron. But this I take to be no more or less than the quality, which, as I mentioned of the shore at the Naze, is found to be in much of the stone all along this shore, viz., of the copperas kind; and it is certain that the copperas stone (so called) is found in all that cliff, and even where the water of this spring has run; and I presume that those who call the hardened pieces of wood, which they take out of this well by the name of iron, never tried the quality of it with the fire or hammer; if they had, perhaps they would have given some other account of it.

On the promontory of land which they call Beacon Hill and which lies beyond or behind the town towards the sea, there is a lighthouse to give the ships directions in their sailing by as well as their coming into the harbour in the night. I shall take notice of these again all together when I come to speak of the Society of Trinity House, as they are called, by whom they are all directed upon this coast.

This town was erected into a marquisate in honour of the truly glorious family of Schomberg, the eldest son of Duke Schomberg, who landed with King William, being styled Marquis of Harwich; but that family (in England, at least) being extinct the title dies also.

Harwich is a town of hurry and business, not much of gaiety and pleasure; yet the inhabitants seem warm in their nests, and some of them are very wealthy. There are not many (if any) gentlemen or families of note either in the town or very near it. They send two members to Parliament; the present are Sir Peter Parker and Humphrey Parsons, Esq.

And now being at the extremity of the county of Essex, of which I have given you some view as to that side next the sea only, I shall break off this part of my letter by telling you that I will take the towns which lie more towards the centre of the county, in my return by the north and west part only, that I may give you a few hints of some towns which were near me in my route this way, and of which being so well known there is but little to say.

On the road from London to Colchester, before I came into it at Witham, lie four good market towns at equal distance from one another, namely, Romford, noted for two markets, viz., one for calves and hogs, the other for corn and other provisions, most, if

not all, bought up for London market. At the farther end of the town, in the middle of a stately park, stood Giddy Hall, vulgarly Giddy Hall, an ancient seat of one Coke, sometime Lord Mayor of London, but forfeited on some occasion to the Crown. It is since pulled down to the ground, and there now stands a noble stately fabric or mansion house, built upon the spot by Sir John Eyles, a wealthy merchant of London, and chosen Sub-Governor of the South Sea Company immediately after the ruin of the former Sub-Governor and Directors, whose overthrow makes the history of these times famous.

Brentwood and Ingatestone, and even Chelmsford itself, have very little to be said of them, but that they are large thoroughfare towns, full of good inns, and chiefly maintained by the excessive multitude of carriers and passengers which are constantly passing this way to London with droves of cattle, provisions, and manufactures for London.

The last of these towns is indeed the county town, where the county gaol is kept, and where the assizes are very often held; it stands on the conflux of two rivers--the Chelmer, whence the town is called, and the Cann.

At Lees, or Lee's Priory, as some call it, is to be seen an ancient house in the middle of a beautiful park, formerly the seat of the late Duke of Manchester, but since the death of the duke it is sold to the Duchess Dowager of Buckinghamshire, the present Duke of Manchester retiring to his ancient family seat at Kimbolton in Huntingdonshire, it being a much finer residence. His grace is lately married to a daughter of the Duke of Montagu by a branch of the house of Marlborough.

Four market towns fill up the rest of this part of the country--Dunmow, Braintree, Thaxted, and Coggeshall--all noted for the manufacture of bays, as above, and for very little else, except I shall make the ladies laugh at the famous old story of the Flitch of Bacon at Dunmow, which is this:

One Robert Fitzwalter, a powerful baron in this county in the time of Henry III., on some merry occasion, which is not preserved in the rest of the story, instituted a custom in the priory here: That whatever married man did not repent of his being married, or quarrel or differ and dispute with his wife within a year and a day after his marriage, and would swear to the truth of it, kneeling upon two hard pointed stones in the churchyard, which stones he caused to be set up in the Priory churchyard for that purpose, the prior and convent, and as many of the town as would, to be present, such person should have a flitch of bacon.

I do not remember to have read that any one ever came to demand it; nor do the people of the place pretend to say, of their own knowledge, that they remember any that did so. A long time ago several did demand it, as they say, but they know not who; neither is there any record of it, nor do they tell us, if it were now to be demanded, who is obliged to deliver the flitch of bacon, the priory being dissolved and gone.

The forest of Epping and Hainault spreads a great part of this country still. I shall speak again of the former in my return from this circuit. Formerly, it is thought, these two forests took up all the west and south part of the county; but particularly we are assured, that it reached to the River Chelmer, and into Dengy Hundred, and from thence again west to Epping and Waltham, where it continues to be a forest still.

Probably this forest of Epping has been a wild or forest ever since this island was inhabited, and may show us, in some parts of it, where enclosures and tillage has not broken in upon it, what the face of this island was before the Romans' time; that is to say, before their landing in Britain.

The constitution of this forest is best seen, I mean as to the antiquity of it, by the merry grant of it from Edward the Confessor before the Norman Conquest to Randolph Peperking, one of his favourites, who was after called Peverell, and whose name remains still in several villages in this county; as particularly that of Hatfield Peverell, in the road from Chelmsford to Witham, which is supposed to be originally a park, which they called a field in those days; and Hartfield may be as much as to say a park for doer; for the stags were in those days called harts, so that this was neither more nor less than Randolph Peperking's Hartfield--that is to say, Ralph Peverell's deer-park.

N.B.--This Ralph Randolph, or Ralph Peverell (call him as you please), had, it seems, a most beautiful lady to his wife, who was daughter of Ingelrick, one of Edward the Confessor's noblemen. He had two sons by her--William Peverell, a famed soldier, and lord or governor of Dover Castle, which he surrendered to William the Conqueror, after the battle in Sussex, and Pain Peverell, his youngest, who was lord of Cambridge. When the eldest son delivered up the castle, the lady, his mother, above named, who was the celebrated beauty of the age, was it seems there, and the Conqueror fell in love with her, and whether by force or by consent, took her away, and she became his mistress, or what else you please to call it. By her he had a son, who was called William, after the Conqueror's Christian name, but retained the name of Peverell, and was afterwards created by the Conqueror lord of Nottingham.

This lady afterwards, as is supposed, by way of penance for her yielding to the Conqueror, founded a nunnery at the village of Hatfield Peverell, mentioned above, and there she lies buried in the chapel of it, which is now the parish church, where her memory is preserved by a tombstone under one of the windows.

Thus we have several towns, where any ancient parks have been placed, called by the name of Hatfield on that very account. As Hatfield Broad Oak in this county, Bishop's Hatfield in Hertfordshire, and several others.

But I return to King Edward's merry way, as I call it, of granting this forest to this Ralph Peperking, which I find in the ancient records, in the very words it was passed in, as follows. Take my explanations with it for the sake of those that are not used to the ancient English:

The Grant in Old English.

Iche EDWARD Koning,
Have given of my Forrest the kepen of the Hundred of Chelmer and
Dancing.
To RANDOLPH PEPERKING,
And to his kindling.
With Heorte and Hind, Doe and Bocke,
Hare and Fox, Cat and Brock,
Wild Fowle with his Flock;
Patrich, Pheasant Hen, and Pheasant Cock,
With green and wild Stub and Stock,
To kepen and to yemen with all her might.
Both by Day, and eke by Night;
And Hounds for to hold,
Good and Swift and Bold:
Four Greyhound and six Raches,
For Hare and Fox, and Wild Cattes,
And therefore Iche made him my Book.
Witness the Bishop of Wolston.
And Booke ylrede many on,
And Sweyne of Essex, our Brother,
And taken him many other
And our steward Howlein,
That By sought me for him.

The Explanation in Modern English

I Edward the king,
Have made ranger of my forest of Chelmsford hundred and Deering
hundred,
Ralph Peverell, for him and his heirs for ever;
With both the red and fallow deer.
Hare and fox, otter and badger;
Wild fowl of all sorts,
Partridges and pheasants,
Timber and underwood roots and tops;
With power to preserve the forest,
And watch it against deer-stealers and others:
With a right to keep hounds of all sorts,
Four greyhounds and six terriers,
Harriers and foxhounds, and other hounds.
And to this end I have registered this my grant in the crown rolls
or books;
To which the bishop has set his hand as a witness for any one to
read.
Also signed by the king's brother (or, as some think, the
Chancellor Sweyn, then Earl or Count of Essex).
He might call such other witnesses to sign as he thought fit.
Also the king's high steward was a witness, at whose request this
grant was obtained of the king.

There are many gentlemen's seats on this side the country, and a great assembly set up at New Hall, near this town, much resorted to by the neighbouring gentry. I shall next proceed to the county of Suffolk, as my first design directed me to do.

From Harwich, therefore, having a mind to view the harbour, I sent my horses round by Manningtree, where there is a timber bridge over the Stour, called Cataway Bridge, and took a boat up the River Orwell for Ipswich. A traveller will hardly understand me, especially a seaman, when I speak of the River Stour and the River Orwell at Harwich, for they know them by no other names than those of Manningtree water and Ipswich water; so while I am on salt water, I must speak as those who use the sea may understand me, and when I am up in the country among the inland towns again, I shall call them out of their names no more.

It is twelve miles from Harwich up the water to Ipswich. Before I come to the town, I must say something of it, because speaking of the river requires it. In former times, that is to say, since the writer of this remembers the place very well, and particularly just before the late Dutch wars, Ipswich was a town of very good business; particularly it was the greatest town in England for large colliers or coal-ships employed between Newcastle and London. Also they built the biggest ships and the best, for the said fetching of coals of any that were employed in that trade. They built, also, there so prodigious strong, that it was an ordinary thing for an Ipswich collier, if no disaster happened to him, to reign (as seamen call it) forty or fifty years, and more.

In the town of Ipswich the masters of these ships generally dwelt, and there were, as they then told me, above a hundred sail of them, belonging to the town at one time, the least of which carried fifteen score, as they compute it, that is, 300 chaldron of coals; this was about the year 1668 (when I first knew the place). This made the town be at that time so populous, for those masters, as they had good ships at sea, so they had large families who lived plentifully, and in very good houses in the town, and several streets were chiefly inhabited by such.

The loss or decay of this trade accounts for the present pretended decay of the town of Ipswich, of which I shall speak more presently. The ships wore out, the masters died off, the trade took a new turn; Dutch flyboats taken in the war, and made free ships by Act of Parliament, thrust themselves into the coal-trade for the interest of the captors, such as the Yarmouth and London merchants, and others; and the Ipswich men dropped gradually out of it, being discouraged by those Dutch flyboats. These Dutch vessels, which cost nothing but the caption, were bought cheap, carried great burthens, and the Ipswich building fell off for want of price, and so the trade decayed, and the town with it. I believe this will be owned for the true beginning of their decay, if I must allow it to be called a decay.

But to return to my passage up the river. In the winter-time those great collier ships, above-mentioned, are always laid up, as they call it; that is to say, the coal trade abates at London, the citizens are generally furnished, their stores taken in, and the

demand is over; so that the great ships, the northern seas and coast being also dangerous, the nights long, and the voyage hazardous, go to sea no more, but lie by, the ships are unrigged, the sails, etc., carried ashore, the top-masts struck, and they ride moored in the river, under the advantages and security of sound ground, and a high woody shore, where they lie as safe as in a wet dock; and it was a very agreeable sight to see, perhaps two hundred sail of ships, of all sizes, lie in that posture every winter. All this while, which was usually from Michaelmas to Lady Day, the masters lived calm and secure with their families in Ipswich; and enjoying plentifully, what in the summer they got laboriously at sea, and this made the town of Ipswich very populous in the winter; for as the masters, so most of the men, especially their mates, boatswains, carpenters, etc., were of the same place, and lived in their proportions, just as the masters did; so that in the winter there might be perhaps a thousand men in the town more than in the summer, and perhaps a greater number.

To justify what I advance here, that this town was formerly very full of people, I ask leave to refer to the account of Mr. Camden, and what it was in his time. His words are these:- "Ipswich has a commodious harbour, has been fortified with a ditch and rampart, has a great trade, and is very populous, being adorned with fourteen churches, and large private buildings." This confirms what I have mentioned of the former state of this town; but the present state is my proper work; I therefore return to my voyage up the river.

The sight of these ships thus laid up in the river, as I have said, was very agreeable to me in my passage from Harwich, about five and thirty years before the present journey; and it was in its proportion equally melancholy to hear that there were now scarce forty sail of good colliers that belonged to the whole town.

In a creek in this river, called Lavington Creek, we saw at low water such shoals, or hills rather, of mussels, that great boats might have loaded with them, and no miss have been made of them. Near this creek, Sir Samuel Barnadiston had a very fine seat, as, also, a decoy for wild ducks, and a very noble estate; but it is divided into many branches since the death of the ancient possessor. But I proceed to the town, which is the first in the county of Suffolk of any note this way.

Ipswich is seated, at the distance of twelve miles from Harwich, upon the edge of the river, which, taking a short turn to the west, the town forms, there, a kind of semicircle, or half moon, upon the bank of the river. It is very remarkable, that though ships of 500 ton may, upon a spring tide, come up very near this town, and many ships of that burthen have been built there, yet the river is not navigable any farther than the town itself, or but very little; no, not for the smallest beats; nor does the tide, which rises sometimes thirteen or fourteen feet, and gives them twenty-four feet water very near the town, flow much farther up the river than the town, or not so much as to make it worth speaking of.

He took little notice of the town, or at least of that part of Ipswich, who published in his wild observations on it that ships of

200 ton are built there. I affirm, that I have seen a ship of 400 ton launched at the building-yard, close to the town; and I appeal to the Ipswich colliers (those few that remain) belonging to this town, if several of them carrying seventeen score of coals, which must be upward of 400 ton, have not formerly been built here; but superficial observers must be superficial writers, if they write at all; and to this day, at John's Ness, within a mile and a half of the town itself, ships of any burthen may be built and launched even at neap tides.

I am much mistaken, too, if since the Revolution some very good ships have not been built at this town, and particularly the Melford or Milford galley, a ship of forty guns; as the Greyhound frigate, a man-of-war of thirty-six to forty guns, was at John's Ness. But what is this towards lessening the town of Ipswich, any more than it would be to say, they do not build men-of-war, or East India ships, or ships of five hundred ton burden at St. Catherines, or at Battle Bridge in the Thames? when we know that a mile or two lower, viz., at Radcliffe, Limehouse, or Deptford, they build ships of a thousand ton, and might build first-rate men-of-war too, if there was occasion; and the like might be done in this river of Ipswich, within about two or three miles of the town; so that it would not be at all an out-of-the-way speaking to say, such a ship was built at Ipswich, any more than it is to say, as they do, that the Royal Prince, the great ship lately built for the South Sea Company, was London built, because she was built at Limehouse.

And why then is not Ipswich capable of building and receiving the greatest ships in the navy, seeing they may be built and brought up again laden, within a mile and half of the town?

But the neighbourhood of London, which sucks the vitals of trade in this island to itself, is the chief reason of any decay of business in this place; and I shall, in the course of these observations, hint at it, where many good seaports and large towns, though farther off than Ipswich, and as well fitted for commerce, are yet swallowed up by the immense indraft of trade to the City of London; and more decayed beyond all comparison than Ipswich is supposed to be: as Southampton, Weymouth, Dartmouth, and several others which I shall speak to in their order; and if it be otherwise at this time, with some other towns, which are lately increased in trade and navigation, wealth, and people, while their neighbours decay, it is because they have some particular trade, or accident to trade, which is a kind of nostrum to them, inseparable to the place, and which fixes there by the nature of the thing; as the herring-fishery to Yarmouth; the coal trade to Newcastle; the Leeds clothing trade; the export of butter and lead, and the great corn trade for Holland, is to Hull; the Virginia and West India trade at Liverpool; the Irish trade at Bristol, and the like. Thus the war has brought a flux of business and people, and consequently of wealth, to several places, as well as to Portsmouth, Chatham, Plymouth, Falmouth, and others; and were any wars like those, to continue twenty years with the Dutch, or any nation whose fleets lay that way, as the Dutch do, it would be the like perhaps at Ipswich in a few years, and at other places on the same coast.

But at this present time an occasion offers to speak in favour of

this port; namely, the Greenland fishery, lately proposed to be carried on by the South Sea Company. On which account I may freely advance this, without any compliment to the town of Ipswich, no place in Britain is equally qualified like Ipswich; whether we respect the cheapness of building and fitting out their ships and shallop; also furnishing, victualling, and providing them with all kinds of stores; convenience for laying up the ships after the voyage, room for erecting their magazines, warehouses, rope walks, cooperages, etc., on the easiest terms; and especially for the noisome cookery, which attends the boiling their blubber, which may be on this river (as it ought to be) remote from any places of resort. Then their nearness to the market for the oil when it is made, and which, above all, ought to be the chief thing considered in that trade, the easiness of their putting out to sea when they begin their voyage, in which the same wind that carries them from the mouth of the haven, is fair to the very seas of Greenland.

I could say much more to this point if it were needful, and in few words could easily prove, that Ipswich must have the preference of all the port towns of Britain, for being the best centre of the Greenland trade, if ever that trade fall into the management of such a people as perfectly understand, and have a due honest regard to its being managed with the best husbandry, and to the prosperity of the undertaking in general. But whether we shall ever arrive at so happy a time as to recover so useful a trade to our country, which our ancestors had the honour to be the first undertakers of, and which has been lost only through the indolence of others, and the increasing vigilance of our neighbours, that is not my business here to dispute.

What I have said is only to let the world see what improvement this town and port is capable of; I cannot think but that Providence, which made nothing in vain, cannot have reserved so useful, so convenient a port to lie vacant in the world, but that the time will some time or other come (especially considering the improving temper of the present age) when some peculiar beneficial business may be found out, to make the port of Ipswich as useful to the world, and the town as flourishing, as Nature has made it proper and capable to be.

As for the town, it is true, it is but thinly inhabited, in comparison of the extent of it; but to say there are hardly any people to be seen there, is far from being true in fact; and whoever thinks fit to look into the churches and meeting-houses on a Sunday, or other public days, will find there are very great numbers of people there. Or if he thinks fit to view the market, and see how the large shambles, called Cardinal Wolsey's Butchery, are furnished with meat, and the rest of the market stocked with other provisions, must acknowledge that it is not for a few people that all those things are provided. A person very curious, and on whose veracity I think I may depend, going through the market in this town, told me, that he reckoned upwards of six hundred country people on horseback and on foot, with baskets and other carriage, who had all of them brought something or other to town to sell, besides the butchers, and what came in carts and waggons.

It happened to be my lot to be once at this town at the time when a

very fine new ship, which was built there for some merchants of London, was to be launched; and if I may give my guess at the numbers of people which appeared on the shore, in the houses, and on the river, I believe I am much within compass if I say there were 20,000 people to see it; but this is only a guess, or they might come a great way to see the sight, or the town may be declined farther since that. But a view of the town is one of the surest rules for a gross estimate.

It is true here is no settled manufacture. The French refugees when they first came over to England began a little to take to this place, and some merchants attempted to set up a linen manufacture in their favour; but it has not met with so much success as was expected, and at present I find very little of it. The poor people are, however, employed, as they are all over these counties, in spinning wool for other towns where manufactures are settled.

The country round Ipswich, as are all the counties so near the coast, is applied chiefly to corn, of which a very great quantity is continually shipped off for London; and sometimes they load corn here for Holland, especially if the market abroad is encouraging. They have twelve parish churches in this town, with three or four meetings; but there are not so many Quakers here as at Colchester, and no Anabaptists or Antipoedo Baptists, that I could hear of--at least, there is no meeting-house of that denomination. There is one meeting-house for the Presbyterians, one for the Independents and one for the Quakers; the first is as large and as fine a building of that kind as most on this side of England, and the inside the best finished of any I have seen, London not excepted; that for the Independents is a handsome new-built building, but not so gay or so large as the other.

There is a great deal of very good company in this town, and though there are not so many of the gentry here as at Bury, yet there are more here than in any other town in the county; and I observed particularly that the company you meet with here are generally persons well informed of the world, and who have something very solid and entertaining in their society. This may happen, perhaps, by their frequent conversing with those who have been abroad, and by their having a remnant of gentlemen and masters of ships among them who have seen more of the world than the people of an inland town are likely to have seen. I take this town to be one of the most agreeable places in England for families who have lived well, but may have suffered in our late calamities of stocks and bubbles, to retreat to, where they may live within their own compass; and several things indeed recommend it to such:-

1. Good houses at very easy rents.
2. An airy, clean, and well-governed town.
3. Very agreeable and improving company almost of every kind.
4. A wonderful plenty of all manner of provisions, whether flesh or fish, and very good of the kind.
5. Those provisions very cheap, so that a family may live cheaper

here than in any town in England of its bigness within such a small distance from London.

6. Easy passage to London, either by land or water, the coach going through to London in a day.

The Lord Viscount Hereford has a very fine seat and park in this town; the house indeed is old built, but very commodious; it is called Christ Church, having been, as it is said, a priory or religious house in former times. The green and park is a great addition to the pleasantness of this town, the inhabitants being allowed to divert themselves there with walking, bowling, etc.

The large spire steeple, which formerly stood upon that they call the tower church, was blown down by a great storm of wind many years ago, and in its a fall did much damage to the church.

The government of this town is by two bailiffs, as at Yarmouth. Mr. Camden says they are chosen out of twelve burgesses called portmen, and two justices out of twenty-four more. There has been lately a very great struggle between the two parties for the choice of these two magistrates, which had this amicable conclusion--namely, that they chose one of either side; so that neither party having the victory, it is to be hoped it may be a means to allay the heats and unneighbourly feuds which such things breed in towns so large as this is. They send two members to Parliament, whereof those at this time are Sir William Thompson, Recorder of London, and Colonel Negus, Deputy Master of the Horse to the king.

There are some things very curious to be seen here, however some superficial writers have been ignorant of them. Dr. Beeston, an eminent physician, began a few years ago a physic garden adjoining to his house in this town; and as he is particularly curious, and, as I was told, exquisitely skilled in botanic knowledge, so he has been not only very diligent, but successful too, in making a collection of rare and exotic plants, such as are scarce to be equalled in England.

One Mr. White, a surgeon, resides also in this town. But before I speak of this gentleman, I must observe that I say nothing from personal knowledge; though if I did, I have too good an opinion of his sense to believe he would be pleased with being flattered or complimented in print. But I must be true to matter of fact. This gentleman has begun a collection or chamber of rarities, and with good success too. I acknowledge I had not the opportunity of seeing them; but I was told there are some things very curious in it, as particularly a sea-horse carefully preserved, and perfect in all its parts; two Roman urns full of ashes of human bodies, and supposed to be above 1,700 years old; besides a great many valuable medals and ancient coins. My friend who gave me this account, and of whom I think I may say he speaks without bias, mentions this gentleman, Mr. White, with some warmth as a very valuable person in his particular employ of a surgeon. I only repeat his words. "Mr. White," says he, "to whom the whole town and country are greatly indebted and obliged to pray for his life, is our most skilful surgeon." These, I say, are his own words, and I add nothing to

them but this, that it is happy for a town to have such a surgeon, as it is for a surgeon to have such a character.

The country round Ipswich, as if qualified on purpose to accommodate the town for building of ships, is an inexhaustible store-house of timber, of which, now their trade of building ships is abated, they send very great quantities to the king's building-yards at Chatham, which by water is so little a way that they often run to it from the mouth of the river at Harwich in one tide.

From Ipswich I took a turn into the country to Hadleigh, principally to satisfy my curiosity and see the place where that famous martyr and pattern of charity and religious zeal in Queen Mary's time, Dr. Rowland Taylor, was put to death. The inhabitants, who have a wonderful veneration for his memory, show the very place where the stake which he was bound to was set up, and they have put a stone upon it which nobody will remove; but it is a more lasting monument to him that he lives in the hearts of the people--I say more lasting than a tomb of marble would be, for the memory of that good man will certainly never be out of the poor people's minds as long as this island shall retain the Protestant religion among them. How long that may be, as things are going, and if the detestable conspiracy of the Papists now on foot should succeed, I will not pretend to say.

A little to the left is Sudbury, which stands upon the River Stour, mentioned above--a river which parts the counties of Suffolk and Essex, and which is within these few years made navigable to this town, though the navigation does not, it seems, answer the charge, at least not to advantage.

I know nothing for which this town is remarkable, except for being very populous and very poor. They have a great manufacture of says and perpetuanas, and multitudes of poor people are employed in working them; but the number of the poor is almost ready to eat up the rich. However, this town sends two members to Parliament, though it is under no form of government particularly to itself other than as a village, the head magistrate whereof is a constable.

Near adjoining to it is a village called Long Melfort, and a very long one it is, from which I suppose it had that addition to its name; it is full of very good houses, and, as they told me, is richer, and has more wealthy masters of the manufacture in it, than in Sudbury itself.

Here and in the neighbourhood are some ancient families of good note; particularly here is a fine dwelling, the ancient seat of the Cordells, whereof Sir William Cordell was Master of the Rolls in the time of Queen Elizabeth; but the family is now extinct, the last heir, Sir John Cordell, being killed by a fall from his horse, died unmarried, leaving three sisters co-heiresses to a very noble estate, most of which, if not all, is now centred on the only surviving sister, and with her in marriage is given to Mr. Firebrass, eldest son of Sir Basil Firebrass, formerly a flourishing merchant in London, but reduced by many disasters. His family now rises by the good fortune of his son, who proves to be a

gentleman of very agreeable parts, and well esteemed in the country.

From this part of the country, I returned north-west by Lenham, to visit St. Edmund's Bury, a town of which other writers have talked very largely, and perhaps a little too much. It is a town famed for its pleasant situation and wholesome air, the Montpelier of Suffolk, and perhaps of England. This must be attributed to the skill of the monks of those times, who chose so beautiful a situation for the seat of their retirement; and who built here the greatest and, in its time, the most flourishing monastery in all these parts of England, I mean the monastery of St. Edmund the Martyr. It was, if we believe antiquity, a house of pleasure in more ancient times, or to speak more properly, a court of some of the Saxon or East Angle kings; and, as Mr. Camden says, was even then called a royal village, though it much better merits that name now; it being the town of all this part of England, in proportion to its bigness, most thronged with gentry, people of the best fashion, and the most polite conversation. This beauty and healthiness of its situation was no doubt the occasion which drew the clergy to settle here, for they always chose the best places in the country to build in, either for richness of soil, or for health and pleasure in the situation of their religious houses.

For the like reason, I doubt not, they translated the bones of the martyred king St. Edmund to this place; for it is a vulgar error to say he was murdered here. His martyrdom, it is plain, was at Hoxon or Henilsdon, near Harlston, on the Waveney, in the farthest northern verge of the county; but Segebert, king of the East Angles, had built a religious house in this pleasant rich part of the county; and as the monks began to taste the pleasure of the place, they procured the body of this saint to be removed hither, which soon increased the wealth and revenues of their house, by the zeal of that day, in going on pilgrimage to the shrine of the blessed St. Edmund.

We read, however, that after this the Danes, under King Sweno, over-running this part of the country, destroyed this monastery and burnt it to the ground, with the church and town. But see the turn religion gives to things in the world; his son, King Canutus, at first a Pagan and a tyrant, and the most cruel ravager of all that crew, coming to turn Christian, and being touched in conscience for the soul of his father, in having robbed God and his holy martyr St. Edmund, sacrilegiously destroying the church, and plundering the monastery; I say, touched with remorse, and, as the monks pretend, terrified with a vision of St. Edmund appearing to him, he rebuilt the house, the church, and the town also, and very much added to the wealth of the abbot and his fraternity, offering his crown at the feet of St. Edmund, giving the house to the monks, town and all; so that they were absolute lords of the town, and governed it by their steward for many ages. He also gave them a great many good lordships, which they enjoyed till the general suppression of abbeys, in the time of Henry VIII.

But I am neither writing the history or searching the antiquity of the abbey, or town; my business is the present state of the place.

The abbey is demolished; its ruins are all that is to be seen of its glory: out of the old building, two very beautiful churches are built, and serve the two parishes, into which the town is divided, and they stand both in one churchyard. Here it was, in the path-way between these two churches, that a tragical and almost unheard-of act of barbarity was committed, which made the place less pleasant for some time than it used to be, when Arundel Coke, Esq., a barrister-at-law, of a very ancient family, attempted, with the assistance of a barbarous assassin, to murder in cold blood, and in the arms of hospitality, Edward Crisp, Esq., his brother-in-law, leading him out from his own house, where he had invited him, his wife and children, to supper; I say, leading him out in the night, on pretence of going to see some friend that was known to them both; but in this churchyard, giving a signal to the assassin he had hired, he attacked him with a hedge-bill, and cut him, as one might say, almost in pieces; and when they did not doubt of his being dead, they left him. His head and face was so mangled, that it may be said to be next to a miracle that he was not quite killed: yet so Providence directed for the exemplary punishment of the assassins, that the gentleman recovered to detect them, who (though he outlived the assault) were both executed as they deserved, and Mr. Crisp is yet alive. They were condemned on the statute for defacing and dismembering, called the Coventry Act.

But this accident does not at all lessen the pleasure and agreeable delightful show of the town of Bury; it is crowded with nobility and gentry, and all sorts of the most agreeable company; and as the company invites, so there is the appearance of pleasure upon the very situation; and they that live at Bury are supposed to live there for the sake of it.

The Lord Jermin, afterwards Lord Dover, and, since his lordship's decease, Sir Robert Davers, enjoyed the most delicious seat of Rushbrook, near this town.

The present members of Parliament for this place are Jermyn Davers and James Reynolds, Esquires.

Mr. Harvey, afterwards created Lord Harvey, by King William, and since that made Earl of Bristol by King George, lived many years in this town, leaving a noble and pleasantly situated house in Lincolnshire, for the more agreeable living on a spot so completely qualified for a life of delight as this of Bury.

The Duke of Grafton, now Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, has also a stately house at Euston, near this town, which he enjoys in right of his mother, daughter to the Earl of Arlington, one of the chief ministers of State in the reign of King Charles II., and who made the second letter in the word "cabal," a word formed by that famous satirist Andrew Marvell, to represent the five heads of the politics of that time, as the word "smectymnus" was on a former occasion.

I shall believe nothing so scandalous of the ladies of this town and the country round it as a late writer insinuates. That the ladies round the country appear mighty gay and agreeable at the time of the fair in this town I acknowledge; one hardly sees such a

show in any part of the world; but to suggest they come hither, as to a market, is so coarse a jest, that the gentlemen that wait on them hither (for they rarely come but in good company) ought to resent and correct him for it.

It is true, Bury Fair, like Bartholomew Fair, is a fair for diversion, more than for trade; and it may be a fair for toys and for trinkets, which the ladies may think fit to lay out some of their money in, as they see occasion. But to judge from thence that the knights' daughters of Norfolk, Cambridgeshire, and Suffolk--that is to say, for it cannot be understood any otherwise, the daughters of all the gentry of the three counties--come hither to be picked up, is a way of speaking I never before heard any author have the assurance to make use of in print.

The assembly he justly commends for the bright appearance of the beauties; but with a sting in the tail of this compliment, where he says they seldom end without some considerable match or intrigue; and yet he owns that during the fair these assemblies are held every night. Now that these fine ladies go intriguing every night, and that too after the comedy is done, which is after the fair and raffling is over for the day, so that it must be very late. This is a terrible character for the ladies of Bury, and intimates, in short, that most of them are loose women, which is a horrid abuse upon the whole country.

Now, though I like not the assemblies at all, and shall in another place give them something of their due, yet having the opportunity to see the fair at Bury, and to see that there were, indeed, abundance of the finest ladies, or as fine as any in Britain, yet I must own the number of the ladies at the comedy, or at the assembly, is no way equal to the number that are seen in the town, much less are they equal to the whole body of the ladies in the three counties; and I must also add, that though it is far from true that all that appear at the assembly are there for matches or intrigues, yet I will venture to say that they are not the worst of the ladies who stay away, neither are they the fewest in number or the meanest in beauty, but just the contrary; and I do not at all doubt, but that the scandalous liberty some take at those assemblies will in time bring them out of credit with the virtuous part of the sex here, as it has done already in Kent and other places, and that those ladies who most value their reputation will be seen less there than they have been; for though the institution of them has been innocent and virtuous, the ill use of them, and the scandalous behaviour of some people at them, will in time arm virtue against them, and they will be laid down as they have been set up without much satisfaction.

But the beauty of this town consists in the number of gentry who dwell in and near it, the polite conversation among them, the affluence and plenty they live in, the sweet air they breathe in, and the pleasant country they have to go abroad in.

Here is no manufacturing in this town, or but very little, except spinning, the chief trade of the place depending upon the gentry who live there, or near it, and who cannot fail to cause trade enough by the expense of their families and equipages among the

people of a county town. They have but a very small river, or rather but a very small branch of a small river, at this town, which runs from hence to Milden Hall, on the edge of the fens. However, the town and gentlemen about have been at the charge, or have so encouraged the engineer who was at the charge, that they have made this river navigable to the said Milden Hall, from whence there is a navigable dyke, called Milden Hall Drain, which goes into the River Ouse, and so to Lynn; so that all their coal and wine, iron, lead, and other heavy goods, are brought by water from Lynn, or from London, by the way of Lynn, to the great ease of the tradesmen.

This town is famous for two great events. One was that in the year 1447, in the 25th year of Henry VI., a Parliament was held here.

The other was, that at the meeting of this Parliament, the great Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, regent of the kingdom during the absence of King Henry V. and the minority of Henry VI., and to his last hour the safeguard of the whole nation, and darling of the people, was basely murdered here; by whose death the gate was opened to that dreadful war between the houses of Lancaster and York, which ended in the confusion of that very race who are supposed to have contrived that murder.

From St. Edmund's Bury I returned by Stowmarket and Needham to Ipswich, that I might keep as near the coast as was proper to my designed circuit or journey; and from Ipswich, to visit the sea again, I went to Woodbridge, and from thence to Orford, on the sea side.

Woodbridge has nothing remarkable, but that it is a considerable market for butter and corn to be exported to London; for now begins that part which is ordinarily called High Suffolk, which, being a rich soil, is for a long tract of ground wholly employed in dairies, and they again famous for the best butter, and perhaps the worst cheese, in England. The butter is barrelled, or often pickled up in small casks, and sold, not in London only, but I have known a firkin of Suffolk butter sent to the West Indies, and brought back to England again, and has been perfectly good and sweet, as at first.

The port for the shipping off their Suffolk butter is chiefly Woodbridge, which for that reason is full of corn factors and butter factors, some of whom are very considerable merchants.

From hence, turning down to the shore, we see Orfordness, a noted point of land for the guide of the colliers and coasters, and a good shelter for them to ride under when a strong north-east wind blows and makes a foul shore on the coast.

South of the Ness is Orford Haven, being the mouth of two little rivers meeting together. It is a very good harbour for small vessels, but not capable of receiving a ship of burden.

Orford was once a good town, but is decayed, and as it stands on the land side of the river the sea daily throws up more land to it, and falls off itself from it, as if it was resolved to disown the

place, and that it should be a seaport no longer.

A little farther lies Aldborough, as thriving, though without a port, as the other is decaying, with a good river in the front of it.

There are some gentlemen's seats up farther from the sea, but very few upon the coast.

From Aldborough to Dunwich there are no towns of note; even this town seems to be in danger of being swallowed up, for fame reports that once they had fifty churches in the town; I saw but one left, and that not half full of people.

This town is a testimony of the decay of public things, things of the most durable nature; and as the old poet expresses it,

"By numerous examples we may see,
That towns and cities die as well as we."

The ruins of Carthage, of the great city of Jerusalem, or of ancient Rome, are not at all wonderful to me. The ruins of Nineveh, which are so entirely sunk as that it is doubtful where the city stood; the ruins of Babylon, or the great Persepolis, and many capital cities, which time and the change of monarchies have overthrown, these, I say, are not at all wonderful, because being the capitals of great and flourishing kingdoms, where those kingdoms were overthrown, the capital cities necessarily fell with them; but for a private town, a seaport, and a town of commerce, to decay, as it were, of itself (for we never read of Dunwich being plundered or ruined by any disaster, at least, not of late years); this, I must confess, seems owing to nothing but to the fate of things, by which we see that towns, kings, countries, families, and persons, have all their elevation, their medium, their declination, and even their destruction in the womb of time, and the course of nature. It is true, this town is manifestly decayed by the invasion of the waters, and as other towns seem sufferers by the sea, or the tide withdrawing from their ports, such as Orford, just now named, Winchelsea in Kent, and the like, so this town is, as it were, eaten up by the sea, as above; and the still encroaching ocean seems to threaten it with a fatal immersion in a few years more.

Yet Dunwich, however ruined, retains some share of trade, as particularly for the shipping of butter, cheese, and corn, which is so great a business in this county, that it employs a great many people and ships also; and this port lies right against the particular part of the county for butter, as Framlingham, Halstead, etc. Also a very great quantity of corn is bought up hereabout for the London market; for I shall still touch that point how all the counties in England contribute something towards the subsistence of the great city of London, of which the butter here is a very considerable article; as also coarse cheese, which I mentioned before, used chiefly for the king's ships.

Hereabouts they begin to talk of herrings and the fishery; and we find in the ancient records that this town, which was then equal to a large city, paid, among other tribute to the government, fifty thousand of herrings. Here also, and at Swole, or Southole, the next seaport, they cure sprats in the same manner as they do herrings at Yarmouth; that is to say, speaking in their own language, they make red sprats; or to speak good English, they make sprats red.

It is remarkable that this town is now so much washed away by the sea, that what little trade they have is carried on by Walderswick, a little town near Swole, the vessels coming in there, because the ruins of Dunwich make the shore there unsafe and uneasy to the boats; from whence the northern coasting seamen a rude verse of their own using, and I suppose of their own making, as follows,

"Swoul and Dunwich, and Walderswick,
All go in at one lousie creek."

This "lousie creek," in short, is a little river at Swoul, which our late famous atlas-maker calls a good harbour for ships, and rendezvous of the royal navy; but that by-the-bye; the author, it seems, knew no better.

From Dunwich we came to Southwold, the town above-named: this is a small port town upon the coast, at the mouth of a little river called the Blith. I found no business the people here were employed in but the fishery, as above, for herrings and sprats, which they cure by the help of smoke, as they do at Yarmouth.

There is but one church in this town, but it is a very large one and well built, as most of the churches in this county are, and of impenetrable flint; indeed, there is no occasion for its being so large, for staying there one Sabbath day, I was surprised to see an extraordinary large church, capable of receiving five or six thousand people, and but twenty-seven in it besides the parson and the clerk; but at the same time the meeting-house of the Dissenters was full to the very doors, having, as I guessed, from six to eight hundred people in it.

This town is made famous for a very great engagement at sea, in the year 1672, between the English and Dutch fleets, in the bay opposite to the town, in which, not to be partial to ourselves, the English fleet was worsted; and the brave Montague, Earl of Sandwich, Admiral under the Duke of York, lost his life. The ship Royal Prince, carrying one hundred guns, in which he was, and which was under him, commanded by Sir Edward Spragg, was burnt, and several other ships lost, and about six hundred seamen; part of those killed in the fight were, as I was told, brought on shore here and buried in the churchyard of this town, as others also were at Ipswich.

At this town in particular, and so at all the towns on this coast, from Orfordness to Yarmouth, is the ordinary place where our summer friends the swallows first land when they come to visit us; and

here they may be said to embark for their return, when they go back into warmer climates; and as I think the following remark, though of so trifling a circumstance, may be both instructing as well as diverting, it may be very proper in this place. The case is this; I was some years before at this place, at the latter end of the year, viz., about the beginning of October, and lodging in a house that looked into the churchyard, I observed in the evening, an unusual multitude of birds sitting on the leads of the church. Curiosity led me to go nearer to see what they were, and I found they were all swallows; that there was such an infinite number that they covered the whole roof of the church, and of several houses near, and perhaps might of more houses which I did not see. This led me to inquire of a grave gentleman whom I saw near me, what the meaning was of such a prodigious multitude of swallows sitting there. "Oh, sir," says he, turning towards the sea, "you may see the reason; the wind is off sea." I did not seem fully informed by that expression, so he goes on, "I perceive, sir," says he, "you are a stranger to it; you must then understand first, that this is the season of the year when the swallows, their food here failing, begin to leave us, and return to the country, wherever it be, from whence I suppose they came; and this being the nearest to the coast of Holland, they come here to embark" (this he said smiling a little); "and now, sir," says he, "the weather being too calm or the wind contrary, they are waiting for a gale, for they are all wind-bound."

This was more evident to me, when in the morning I found the wind had come about to the north-west in the night, and there was not one swallow to be seen of near a million, which I believe was there the night before.

How those creatures know that this part of the Island of Great Britain is the way to their home, or the way that they are to go; that this very point is the nearest cut over, or even that the nearest cut is best for them, that we must leave to the naturalists to determine, who insist upon it that brutes cannot think.

Certain it is that the swallows neither come hither for warm weather nor retire from cold; the thing is of quite another nature. They, like the shoals of fish in the sea, pursue their prey; they are a voracious creature, they feed flying; their food is found in the air, viz., the insects, of which in our summer evenings, in damp and moist places, the air is full. They come hither in the summer because our air is fuller of fogs and damps than in other countries, and for that reason feeds great quantities of insects. If the air be hot and dry the gnats die of themselves, and even the swallows will be found famished for want, and fall down dead out of the air, their food being taken from them. In like manner, when cold weather comes in the insects all die, and then of necessity the swallows quit us, and follow their food wherever they go. This they do in the manner I have mentioned above, for sometimes they are seen to go off in vast flights like a cloud. And sometimes again, when the wind grows fair, they go away a few and a few as they come, not staying at all upon the coast.

Note.--This passing and re-passing of the swallows is observed nowhere so much, that I have heard of, or in but few other places,

except on this eastern coast, namely, from above Harwich to the east point of Norfolk, called Winterton Ness, North, which is all right against Holland. We know nothing of them any farther north, the passage of the sea being, as I suppose, too broad from Flamborough Head and the shore of Holderness in Yorkshire, etc.

I find very little remarkable on this side of Suffolk, but what is on the sea-shore as above. The inland country is that which they properly call High Suffolk, and is full of rich feeding grounds and large farms, mostly employed in dairies for making the Suffolk butter and cheese, of which I have spoken already. Among these rich grounds stand some market towns, though not of very considerable note; such as Framlingham, where was once a royal castle, to which Queen Mary retired when the Northumberland faction, in behalf of the Lady Jane, endeavoured to supplant her. And it was this part of Suffolk where the Gospellers, as they were then called, preferred their loyalty to their religion, and complimented the Popish line at expense of their share of the Reformation. But they paid dear for it, and their successors have learned better politics since.

In these parts are also several good market towns, some in this county and some in the other, as Beccles, Bungay, Harleston, etc., all on the edge of the River Waveney, which parts here the counties of Suffolk and Norfolk. And here in a bye-place, and out of common remark, lies the ancient town of Hoxon, famous for being the place where St. Edmund was martyred, for whom so many cells and shrines have been set up and monasteries built, and in honour of whom the famous monastery of St. Edmundsbury, above mentioned, was founded, which most people erroneously think was the place where the said murder was committed.

Besides the towns mentioned above, there are Halesworth, Saxmundham, Debenham, Aye, or Eye, all standing in this eastern side of Suffolk, in which, as I have said, the whole country is employed in dairies or in feeding of cattle.

This part of England is also remarkable for being the first where the feeding and fattening of cattle, both sheep as well as black cattle, with turnips, was first practised in England, which is made a very great part of the improvement of their lands to this day, and from whence the practice is spread over most of the east and south parts of England to the great enriching of the farmers and increase of fat cattle. And though some have objected against the goodness of the flesh thus fed with turnips, and have fancied it would taste of the root, yet upon experience it is found that at market there is no difference, nor can they that buy single out one joint of mutton from another by the taste. So that the complaint which our nice palates at first made begins to cease of itself, and a very great quantity of beef and mutton also is brought every year and every week to London from this side of England, and much more than was formerly known to be fed there.

I cannot omit, however little it may seem, that this county of Suffolk is particularly famous for furnishing the City of London and all the counties round with turkeys, and that it is thought there are more turkeys bred in this county and the part of Norfolk

that adjoins to it than in all the rest of England, especially for sale, though this may be reckoned, as I say above, but a trifling thing to take notice of in these remarks; yet, as I have hinted, that I shall observe how London is in general supplied with all its provisions from the whole body of the nation, and how every part of the island is engaged in some degree or other of that supply. On this account I could not omit it, nor will it be found so inconsiderable an article as some may imagine, if this be true, which I received an account of from a person living on the place, viz., that they have counted three hundred droves of turkeys (for they drive them all in droves on foot) pass in one season over Stratford Bridge on the River Stour, which parts Suffolk from Essex, about six miles from Colchester, on the road from Ipswich to London. These droves, as they say, generally contain from three hundred to a thousand each drove; so that one may suppose them to contain five hundred one with another, which is one hundred and fifty thousand in all; and yet this is one of the least passages, the numbers which travel by Newmarket Heath and the open country and the forest, and also the numbers that come by Sudbury and Clare being many more.

For the further supplies of the markets of London with poultry, of which these countries particularly abound, they have within these few years found it practicable to make the geese travel on foot too, as well as the turkeys, and a prodigious number are brought up to London in droves from the farthest parts of Norfolk; even from the fen country about Lynn, Downham, Wisbech, and the Washes; as also from all the east side of Norfolk and Suffolk, of whom it is very frequent now to meet droves with a thousand, sometimes two thousand in a drove. They begin to drive them generally in August, by which time the harvest is almost over, and the geese may feed in the stubbles as they go. Thus they hold on to the end of October, when the roads begin to be too stiff and deep for their broad feet and short legs to march in.

Besides these methods of driving these creatures on foot, they have of late also invented a new method of carriage, being carts formed on purpose, with four stories or stages to put the creatures in one above another, by which invention one cart will carry a very great number; and for the smoother going they drive with two horses abreast, like a coach, so quartering the road for the ease of the gentry that thus ride. Changing horses, they travel night and day, so that they bring the fowls seventy, eighty, or, one hundred miles in two days and one night. The horses in this new-fashioned voiture go two abreast, as above, but no perch below, as in a coach, but they are fastened together by a piece of wood lying crosswise upon their necks, by which they are kept even and together, and the driver sits on the top of the cart like as in the public carriages for the army, etc.

In this manner they hurry away the creatures alive, and infinite numbers are thus carried to London every year. This method is also particular for the carrying young turkeys or turkey poult's in their season, which are valuable, and yield a good price at market; as also for live chickens in the dear seasons, of all which a very great number are brought in this manner to London, and more prodigiously out of this country than any other part of England,

which is the reason of my speaking of it here.

In this part, which we call High Suffolk, there are not so many families of gentry or nobility placed as in the other side of the country. But it is observed that though their seats are not so frequent here, their estates are; and the pleasure of West Suffolk is much of it supported by the wealth of High Suffolk, for the richness of the lands and application of the people to all kinds of improvement is scarce credible; also the farmers are so very considerable and their farms and dairies so large that it is very frequent for a farmer to have 1,000 pounds stock upon his farm in cows only.

NORFOLK

From High Suffolk I passed the Waveney into Norfolk, near Schole Inn. In my passage I saw at Redgrave (the seat of the family) a most exquisite monument of Sir John Holt, Knight, late Lord Chief Justice of the King's Bench several years, and one of the most eminent lawyers of his time. One of the heirs of the family is now building a fine seat about a mile on the south side of Ipswich, near the road.

The epitaph or inscription on this monument is as follows:-

M. S.
D. Johannis Holt, Equitis Aur.
Totius Anglie in Banco Regis
per 21 Annos continuos
Capitalis Justitiarii
Gulielmo Regi Annoeqr Reginae
Consiliarii perpetui:
Libertatis ac Legum Anglicarum
Assertoris, Vindicis, Custodis,
Vigilis Acris & intrepidi,
Rolandus Frater Uncius & Hoeres
Optime de se Merito
posuit,
Die Martis Vto. 1709. Sublatus est
ex Oculis nostris
Natus 30 Decembris, Anno 1642.

When we come into Norfolk, we see a face of diligence spread over the whole country; the vast manufactures carried on (in chief) by the Norwich weavers employs all the country round in spinning yarn for them; besides many thousand packs of yarn which they receive from other countries, even from as far as Yorkshire and Westmoreland, of which I shall speak in its place.

This side of Norfolk is very populous, and thronged with great and spacious market-towns, more and larger than any other part of England so far from London, except Devonshire, and the West Riding of Yorkshire; for example, between the frontiers of Suffolk and the

city of Norwich on this side, which is not above 22 miles in breadth, are the following market-towns, viz.:-

Thetford, Hingham, Harleston,
Diss, West Dereham, E. Dereham,
Harling, Attleborough, Watton,
Bucknam, Windham, Loddon, etc.

Most of these towns are very populous and large; but that which is most remarkable is, that the whole country round them is so interspersed with villages, and those villages so large, and so full of people, that they are equal to market-towns in other countries; in a word, they render this eastern part of Norfolk exceeding full of inhabitants.

An eminent weaver of Norwich gave me a scheme of their trade on this occasion, by which, calculating from the number of looms at that time employed in the city of Norwich only, besides those employed in other towns in the same county, he made it appear very plain, that there were 120,000 people employed in the woollen and silk and wool manufactures of that city only; not that the people all lived in the city, though Norwich is a very large and populous city too: but, I say, they were employed for spinning the yarn used for such goods as were all made in that city. This account is curious enough, and very exact, but it is too long for the compass of this work.

This shows the wonderful extent of the Norwich manufacture, or stuff-weaving trade, by which so many thousands of families are maintained. Their trade, indeed, felt a very sensible decay, and the cries of the poor began to be very loud, when the wearing of painted calicoes was grown to such a height in England, as was seen about two or three years ago; but an Act of Parliament having been obtained, though not without great struggle, in the years 1720 and 1721, for prohibiting the use and wearing of calicoes, the stuff trade revived incredibly; and as I passed this part of the country in the year 1723, the manufacturers assured me that there was not, in all the eastern and middle part of Norfolk, any hand unemployed, if they would work; and that the very children, after four or five years of age, could every one earn their own bread. But I return to speak of the villages and towns in the rest of the county; I shall come to the city of Norwich by itself.

This throng of villages continues through all the east part of the country, which is of the greatest extent, and where the manufacture is chiefly carried on. If any part of it be waste and thin of inhabitants, it is the west part, drawing a line from about Brand, or Brandon, south, to Walsingham, north. This part of the country indeed is full of open plains, and somewhat sandy and barren, and feeds great flocks of good sheep; but put it all together, the county of Norfolk has the most people in the least tract of land of any county in England, except about London, and Exon, and the West Riding of Yorkshire, as above.

Add to this, that there is no single county in England, except as

above, that can boast of three towns so populous, so rich, and so famous for trade and navigation, as in this county. By these three towns, I mean the city of Norwich, the towns of Yarmouth and Lynn. Besides that, it has several other seaports of very good trade, as Wisbech, Wells, Burnham, Clye, etc.

Norwich is the capital of all the county, and the centre of all the trade and manufactures which I have just mentioned; an ancient, large, rich, and populous city. If a stranger was only to ride through or view the city of Norwich for a day, he would have much more reason to think there was a town without inhabitants, than there is really to say so of Ipswich; but on the contrary if he was to view the city, either on a Sabbath-day, or on any public occasion, he would wonder where all the people could dwell, the multitude is so great. But the case is this: the inhabitants being all busy at their manufactures, dwell in their garrets at their looms, and in their combing shops (so they call them), twisting-mills, and other work-houses, almost all the works they are employed in being done within doors. There are in this city thirty-two parishes besides the cathedral, and a great many meeting-houses of Dissenters of all denominations. The public edifices are chiefly the castle, ancient and decayed, and now for many years past made use of for a gaol. The Duke of Norfolk's house was formerly kept well, and the gardens preserved for the pleasure and diversion of the citizens, but since feeling too sensibly the sinking circumstances of that once glorious family, who were the first peers and hereditary earl-marshals of England.

The walls of this city are reckoned three miles in circumference, taking in more ground than the City of London, but much of that ground lying open in pasture-fields and gardens; nor does it seem to be, like some ancient places, a decayed, declining town, and that the walls mark out its ancient dimensions; for we do not see room to suppose that it was ever larger or more populous than it is now. But the walls seem to be placed as if they expected that the city would in time increase sufficiently to fill them up with buildings.

The cathedral of this city is a fine fabric, and the spire steeple very high and beautiful. It is not ancient, the bishop's see having been first at Thetford, from whence it was not translated hither till the twelfth century. Yet the church has so many antiquities in it, that our late great scholar and physician, Sir Thomas Brown, thought it worth his while to write a whole book to collect the monuments and inscriptions in this church, to which I refer the reader.

The River Yare runs through this city, and is navigable thus far without the help of any art (that is to say, without locks or stops), and being increased by other waters, passes afterwards through a long tract of the richest meadows, and the largest, take them all together, that are anywhere in England, lying for thirty miles in length, from this city to Yarmouth, including the return of the said meadows on the bank of the Waveney south, and on the River Thurn north.

Here is one thing indeed strange in itself, and more so, in that

history seems to be quite ignorant of the occasion of it. The River Waveney is a considerable river, and of a deep and full channel, navigable for large barges as high as Beccles; it runs for a course of about fifty miles, between the two counties of Suffolk and Norfolk, as a boundary to both; and pushing on, though with a gentle stream, towards the sea, no one would doubt, but, that when they see the river growing broader and deeper, and going directly towards the sea, even to the edge of the beach--that is to say, within a mile of the main ocean--no stranger, I say, but would expect to see its entrance into the sea at that place, and a noble harbour for ships at the mouth of it; when on a sudden, the land rising high by the seaside, crosses the head of the river, like a dam, checks the whole course of it, and it returns, bending its course west, for two miles, or thereabouts; and then turning north, through another long course of meadows (joining to those just now mentioned) seeks out the River Yare, that it may join its water with hers, and find their way to the sea together

Some of our historians tell a long, fabulous story of this river being once open, and a famous harbour for ships belonging to a town of Lowestoft adjoining; but that the town of Yarmouth envying the prosperity of the said town of Lowestoft, made war upon them; and that after many bloody battles, as well by sea as by land, they came at last to a decisive action at sea with their respective fleets, and the victory fell to the Yarmouth men, the Lowestoft fleet being overthrown and utterly destroyed; and that upon this victory, the Yarmouth men either actually did stop up the mouth of the said river, or obliged the vanquished Lowestoft men to do it themselves, and bound them never to attempt to open it again.

I believe my share of this story, and I recommend no more of it to the reader; adding, that I see no authority for the relation, neither do the relators agree either in the time of it, or in the particulars of the fact; that is to say, in whose reign, or under what government all this happened; in what year, and the like; so I satisfy myself with transcribing the matter of fact, and then leave it as I find it.

In this vast tract of meadows are fed a prodigious number of black cattle which are said to be fed up for the fattest beef, though not the largest in England; and the quantity is so great, as that they not only supply the city of Norwich, the town of Yarmouth, and county adjacent, but send great quantities of them weekly in all the winter season to London.

And this in particular is worthy remark, that the gross of all the Scots cattle which come yearly into England are brought hither, being brought to a small village lying north of the city of Norwich, called St. Faith's, where the Norfolk graziers go and buy them.

These Scots runts, so they call them, coming out of the cold and barren mountains of the Highlands in Scotland, feed so eagerly on the rich pasture in these marshes, that they thrive in an unusual manner, and grow monstrously fat; and the beef is so delicious for taste, that the inhabitants prefer them to the English cattle, which are much larger and fairer to look at; and they may very well

do so. Some have told me, and I believe with good judgment, that there are above forty thousand of these Scots cattle fed in this county every year, and most of them in the said marshes between Norwich, Beccles, and Yarmouth.

Yarmouth is an ancient town, much older than Norwich; and at present, though not standing on so much ground, yet better built; much more complete; for number of inhabitants, not much inferior; and for wealth, trade, and advantage of its situation, infinitely superior to Norwich.

It is placed on a peninsula between the River Yare and the sea; the two last lying parallel to one another, and the town in the middle. The river lies on the west side of the town, and being grown very large and deep, by a conflux of all the rivers on this side the county, forms the haven; and the town facing to the west also, and open to the river, makes the finest quay in England, if not in Europe, not inferior even to that of Marseilles itself.

The ships ride here so close, and, as it were, keeping up one another, with their headfasts on shore, that for half a mile together they go across the stream with their bowsprits over the land, their bows, or heads touching the very wharf; so that one may walk from ship to ship as on a floating bridge, all along by the shore-side. The quay reaching from the drawbridge almost to the south gate, is so spacious and wide, that in some places it is near one hundred yards from the houses to the wharf. In this pleasant and agreeable range of houses are some very magnificent buildings, and among the rest, the Custom House and Town Hall, and some merchant's houses, which look like little palaces rather than the dwelling-houses of private men.

The greatest defect of this beautiful town seems to be that, though it is very rich and increasing in wealth and trade, and consequently in people, there is not room to enlarge the town by building, which would be certainly done much more than it is, but that the river on the land side prescribes them, except at the north end without the gate; and even there the land is not very agreeable. But had they had a larger space within the gates there would before now have been many spacious streets of noble fine buildings erected, as we see is done in some other thriving towns in England, as at Liverpool, Manchester, Bristol, Frome, etc.

The quay and the harbour of this town during the fishing fair, as they call it, which is every Michaelmas, one sees the land covered with people, and the river with barques and boats, busy day and night landing and carrying of the herrings, which they catch here in such prodigious quantities, that it is incredible. I happened to be there during their fishing fair, when I told in one tide 110 barques and fishing vessels coming up the river all laden with herrings, and all taken the night before; and this was besides what was brought on shore on the Dean (that is the seaside of the town) by open boats, which they call cobles, and which often bring in two or three last of fish at a time. The barques often bring in ten last a piece.

This fishing fair begins on Michaelmas Day, and lasts all the month

of October, by which time the herrings draw off to sea, shoot their spawn, and are no more fit for the merchant's business--at least, not those that are taken thereabouts.

The quantity of herrings that are caught in this season are diversely accounted for. Some have said that the towns of Yarmouth and Lowestoft only have taken 40,000 last in a season. I will not venture to confirm that report; but this I have heard the merchants themselves say, viz., that they have cured--that is to say, hanged and dried in the smoke--40,000 barrels of merchantable red herrings in one season, which is in itself (though far short of the other) yet a very considerable article; and it is to be added that this is besides all the herrings consumed in the country towns of both those populous counties for thirty miles from the sea, whither very great quantities are carried every tide during the whole season.

But this is only one branch of the great trade carried on in this town. Another part of this commerce is in the exporting these herrings after they are cured; and for this their merchants have a great trade to Genoa, Leghorn, Naples, Messina, and Venice; as also to Spain and Portugal, also exporting with their herring very great quantities of worsted stuffs, and stuffs made of silk and worsted, camblets, etc., the manufactures of the neighbouring city of Norwich and of the places adjacent.

Besides this, they carry on a very considerable trade with Holland, whose opposite neighbours they are; and a vast quantity of woollen manufactures they export to the Dutch every year. Also they have a fishing trade to the North Seas for white fish, which from the place are called the North Sea cod.

They have also a considerable trade to Norway and to the Baltic, from whence they bring back deals and fir timber, oaken plank, balks, spars, oars, pitch, tar, hemp, flax, spruce canvas, and sail-cloth, with all manner of naval stores, which they generally have a consumption for in their own port, where they build a very great number of ships every year, besides refitting and repairing the old.

Add to this the coal trade between Newcastle and the river of Thames, in which they are so improved of late years that they have now a greater share of it than any other town in England, and have quite worked the Ipswich men out of it who had formerly the chief share of the colliery in their hands.

For the carrying on all these trades they must have a very great number of ships, either of their own or employed by them: and it may in some measure be judged of by this that in the year 1697, I had an account from the town register that there was then 1,123 sail of ships using the sea and belonged to the town, besides such ships as the merchants of Yarmouth might be concerned in, and be part owners of, belonging to any other ports.

To all this I must add, without compliment to the town or to the people, that the merchants, and even the generality of traders of Yarmouth, have a very good reputation in trade as well abroad as at home for men of fair and honourable dealing, punctual and just in

their performing their engagements and in discharging commissions; and their seamen, as well masters as mariners, are justly esteemed among the ablest and most expert navigators in England.

This town, however populous and large, was ever contained in one parish, and had but one church; but within these two years they have built another very fine church near the south end of the town. The old church is dedicated to St. Nicholas, and was built by that famous Bishop of Norwich, William Herbert, who flourished in the reign of William II., and Henry I., William of Malmesbury, calls him Vir Pecuniosus; he might have called him Vir Pecuniosissimus, considering the times he lived in, and the works of charity and munificence which he has left as witnesses of his immense riches; for he built the Cathedral Church, the Priory for sixty monks, the Bishop's Palace, and the parish church of St. Leonard, all in Norwich; this great church at Yarmouth, the Church of St. Margaret at Lynn, and of St. Mary at Elmham. He removed the episcopal see from Thetford to Norwich, and instituted the Cluniack Monks at Thetford, and gave them or built them a house. This old church is very large, and has a high spire, which is a useful sea-mark.

Here is one of the finest market-places and the best served with provisions in England, London excepted; and the inhabitants are so multiplied in a few years that they seem to want room in their town rather than people to fill it, as I have observed above.

The streets are all exactly straight from north to south, with lanes or alleys, which they call rows, crossing them in straight lines also from east to west, so that it is the most regular built town in England, and seems to have been built all at once; or that the dimensions of the houses and extent of the streets were laid out by consent.

They have particular privileges in this town and a jurisdiction by which they can try, condemn, and execute in especial cases without waiting for a warrant from above; and this they exerted once very smartly in executing a captain of one of the king's ships of war in the reign of King Charles II. for a murder committed in the street, the circumstance of which did indeed call for justice; but some thought they would not have ventured to exert their powers as they did. However, I never heard that the Government resented it or blamed them for it.

It is also a very well-governed town, and I have nowhere in England observed the Sabbath day so exactly kept, or the breach so continually punished, as in this place, which I name to their honour.

Among all these regularities it is no wonder if we do not find abundance of revelling, or that there is little encouragement to assemblies, plays, and gaming meetings at Yarmouth as in some other places; and yet I do not see that the ladies here come behind any of the neighbouring counties, either in beauty, breeding, or behaviour; to which may be added too, not at all to their disadvantage, that they generally go beyond them in fortunes.

From Yarmouth I resolved to pursue my first design, viz., to view

the seaside on this coast, which is particularly famous for being one of the most dangerous and most fatal to the sailors in all England--I may say in all Britain--and the more so because of the great number of ships which are continually going and coming this way in their passage between London and all the northern coasts of Great Britain. Matters of antiquity are not my inquiry, but principally observations on the present state of things, and, if possible, to give such accounts of things worthy of recording as have never been observed before; and this leads me the more directly to mention the commerce and the navigation when I come to towns upon the coast as what few writers have yet meddled with.

The reason of the dangers of this particular coast are found in the situation of the county and in the course of ships sailing this way, which I shall describe as well as I can thus:- The shore from the mouth of the River of Thames to Yarmouth Roads lies in a straight line from SSE. to NNW., the land being on the W. or larboard side.

From Wintertonness, which is the utmost northerly point of land in the county of Norfolk, and about four miles beyond Yarmouth, the shore falls off for nearly sixty miles to the west, as far as Lynn and Boston, till the shore of Lincolnshire tends north again for about sixty miles more as far as the Humber, whence the coast of Yorkshire, or Holderness, which is the east riding, shoots out again into the sea, to the Spurn and to Flamborough Head, as far east, almost, as the shore of Norfolk had given back at Winterton, making a very deep gulf or bay between those two points of Winterton and the Spurn Head; so that the ships going north are obliged to stretch away to sea from Wintertonness, and leaving the sight of land in that deep bay which I have mentioned, that reaches to Lynn and the shore of Lincolnshire, they go, I say, N. or still NNW. to meet the shore of Holderness, which I said runs out into the sea again at the Spurn; and the first land they make or desire to make, is called as above, Flamborough Head, so that Wintertonness and Flamborough Head are the two extremes of this course, there is, as I said, the Spurn Head indeed between; but as it lies too far in towards the Humber, they keep out to the north to avoid coming near it.

In like manner the ships which come from the north, leave the shore at Flamborough Head, and stretch away SSE. for Yarmouth Roads; and they first land they make is Wintertonness (as above). Now, the danger of the place is this: if the ships coming from the north are taken with a hard gale of wind from the SE., or from any point between NE. and SE., so that they cannot, as the seamen call it, weather Wintertonness, they are thereby kept within that deep bay; and if the wind blows hard, are often in danger of running on shore upon the rocks about Cromer, on the north coast of Norfolk, or stranding upon the flat shore between Cromer and Wells; all the relief they have, is good ground tackle to ride it out, which is very hard to do there, the sea coming very high upon them; or if they cannot ride it out then, to run into the bottom of the great bay I mentioned, to Lynn or Boston, which is a very difficult and desperate push: so that sometimes in this distress whole fleets have been lost here altogether.

The like is the danger to ships going northward, if after passing by Winterton they are taken short with a north-east wind, and cannot put back into the Roads, which very often happens, then they are driven upon the same coast, and embayed just as the latter. The danger on the north part of this bay is not the same, because if ships going or coming should be taken short on this side Flamborough, there is the river Humber open to them, and several good roads to have recourse to, as Burlington Bay, Grimsby Road, and the Spurn Head, and others, where they ride under shelter.

The dangers of this place being thus considered, it is no wonder, that upon the shore beyond Yarmouth there are no less than four lighthouses kept flaming every night, besides the lights at Castor, north of the town, and at Goulston S., all of which are to direct the sailors to keep a good offing in case of bad weather, and to prevent their running into Cromer Bay, which the seamen call the devil's throat.

As I went by land from Yarmouth northward, along the shore towards Cromer aforesaid, and was not then fully master of the reason of these things, I was surprised to see, in all the way from Winterton, that the farmers and country people had scarce a barn, or a shed, or a stable, nay, not the pales of their yards and gardens, not a hogstye, not a necessary house, but what was built of old planks, beams, wales, and timbers, etc., the wrecks of ships, and ruins of mariners' and merchants' fortunes; and in some places were whole yards filled and piled up very high with the same stuff laid up, as I supposed to sell for the like building purposes, as there should he occasion.

About the year 1692 (I think it was that year) there was a melancholy example of what I have said of this place: a fleet of 200 sail of light colliers (so they call the ships bound northward empty to fetch coals from Newcastle to London) went out of Yarmouth Roads with a fair wind, to pursue their voyage, and were taken short with a storm of wind at NE. after they were past Wintertonness, a few leagues; some of them, whose masters were a little more wary than the rest, or perhaps, who made a better judgment of things, or who were not so far out as the rest, tacked, and put back in time, and got safe into the roads; but the rest pushing on in hopes to keep out to sea, and weather it, were by the violence of the storm driven back, when they were too far embayed to weather Wintertonness as above, and so were forced to run west, everyone shifting for themselves as well as they could; some run away for Lynn Deeps, but few of them (the night being so dark) could find their way in there; some, but very few, rode it out at a distance; the rest, being above 140 sail, were all driven on shore and dashed to pieces, and very few of the people on board were saved: at the very same unhappy juncture, a fleet of laden ships were coming from the north, and being just crossing the same bay, were forcibly driven into it, not able to weather the Ness, and so were involved in the same ruin as the light fleet was; also some coasting vessels laden with corn from Lynn and Wells, and bound for Holland, were with the same unhappy luck just come out to begin their voyage, and some of them lay at anchor; these also met with the same misfortune, so that, in the whole, above 200 sail of ships, and above a thousand people, perished in the disaster of

that one miserable night, very few escaping.

Cromer is a market town close to the shore of this dangerous coast. I know nothing it is famous for (besides it being thus the terror of the sailors) except good lobsters, which are taken on that coast in great numbers and carried to Norwich, and in such quantities sometimes too as to be conveyed by sea to London.

Farther within the land, and between this place and Norwich, are several good market towns, and innumerable villages, all diligently applying to the woollen manufacture, and the country is exceedingly fruitful and fertile, as well in corn as in pastures; particularly, which was very pleasant to see, the pheasants were in such great plenty as to be seen in the stubbles like cocks and hens--a testimony though, by the way, that the county had more tradesmen than gentlemen in it; indeed, this part is so entirely given up to industry, that what with the seafaring men on the one side, and the manufactures on the other, we saw no idle hands here, but every man busy on the main affair of life, that is to say, getting money; some of the principal of these towns are:- Alsham, North Walsham, South Walsham, Worsted, Caston, Reepham, Holt, Saxthorp, St. Faith's, Blikling, and many others. Near the last, Sir John Hobart, of an ancient family in this county, has a noble seat, but old built. This is that St. Faith's, where the drovers bring their black cattle to sell to the Norfolk graziers, as is observed above.

From Cromer we ride on the strand or open shore to Weyburn Hope, the shore so flat that in some places the tide ebbs out near two miles. From Weyburn west lies Clye, where there are large salt-works and very good salt made, which is sold all over the county, and sometimes sent to Holland and to the Baltic. From Clye we go to Masham and to Wells, all towns on the coast, in each whereof there is a very considerable trade carried on with Holland for corn, which that part of the county is very full of. I say nothing of the great trade driven here from Holland, back again to England, because I take it to be a trade carried on with much less honesty than advantage, especially while the clandestine trade, or the art of smuggling was so much in practice: what it is now, is not to my present purpose.

Near this town lie The Seven Burnhams, as they are called, that is to say, seven small towns, all called by the same name, and each employed in the same trade of carrying corn to Holland, and bringing back,--etc.

From hence we turn to the south-west to Castle Rising, an old decayed borough town, with perhaps not ten families in it, which yet (to the scandal of our prescription right) sends two members to the British Parliament, being as many as the City of Norwich itself or any town in the kingdom, London excepted, can do.

On our left we see Walsingham, an ancient town, famous for the old ruins of a monastery of note there, and the Shrine of our Lady, as noted as that of St. Thomas-a-Becket at Canterbury, and for little else.

Near this place are the seats of the two allied families of the

Lord Viscount Townsend and Robert Walpole, Esq.; the latter at this time one of the Lords Commissioners of the Treasury and Minister of State, and the former one of the principal Secretaries of State to King George, of which again.

From hence we went to Lynn, another rich and populous thriving port-town. It stands on more ground than the town of Yarmouth, and has, I think, parishes, yet I cannot allow that it has more people than Yarmouth, if so many. It is a beautiful, well built, and well situated town, at the mouth of the River Ouse, and has this particular attending it, which gives it a vast advantage in trade; namely, that there is the greatest extent of inland navigation here of any port in England, London excepted. The reason whereof is this, that there are more navigable rivers empty themselves here into the sea, including the washes, which are branches of the same port, than at any one mouth of waters in England, except the Thames and the Humber. By these navigable rivers, the merchants of Lynn supply about six counties wholly, and three counties in part, with their goods, especially wine and coals, viz., by the little Ouse, they send their goods to Brandon and Thetford, by the Lake to Mildenhall, Barton Mills, and St. Edmundsbury; by the River Grant to Cambridge, by the great Ouse itself to Ely, to St. Ives, to St. Neots, to Barford Bridge, and to Bedford; by the River Nyne to Peterborough; by the drains and washes to Wisbeach, to Spalding, Market Deeping, and Stamford; besides the several counties, into which these goods are carried by land-carriage, from the places, where the navigation of those rivers end; which has given rise to this observation on the town of Lynn, that they bring in more coals than any sea-port between London and Newcastle; and import more wines than any port in England, except London and Bristol; their trade to Norway and to the Baltic Sea is also great in proportion, and of late years they have extended their trade farther to the southward.

Here are more gentry, and consequently is more gaiety in this town than in Yarmouth, or even in Norwich itself--the place abounding in very good company.

The situation of this town renders it capable of being made very strong, and in the late wars it was so; a line of fortification being drawn round it at a distance from the walls; the ruins, or rather remains of which works appear very fair to this day; nor would it be a hard matter to restore the bastions, with the ravelins, and counterscarp, upon any sudden emergency, to a good state of defence: and that in a little time, a sufficient number of workmen being employed, especially because they are able to fill all their ditches with water from the sea, in such a manner as that it cannot be drawn off.

There is in the market-place of this town a very fine statue of King William on horseback, erected at the charge of the town. The Ouse is mighty large and deep, close to the very town itself, and ships of good burthen may come up to the quay; but there is no bridge, the stream being too strong and the bottom morish and unsound; nor, for the same reason, is the anchorage computed the best in the world; but there are good roads farther down.

They pass over here in boats into the fen country, and over the famous washes into Lincolnshire, but the passage is very dangerous and uneasy, and where passengers often miscarry and are lost; but then it is usually on their venturing at improper times, and without the guides, which if they would be persuaded not to do, they would very rarely fail of going or coming safe.

From Lynn I bent my course to Downham, where is an ugly wooden bridge over the Ouse; from whence we passed the fen country to Wisbeach, but saw nothing that way to tempt our curiosity but deep roads, innumerable drains and dykes of water, all navigable, and a rich soil, the land bearing a vast quantity of good hemp, but a base unwholesome air; so we came back to Ely, whose cathedral, standing in a level flat country, is seen far and wide, and of which town, when the minster, so they call it, is described, everything remarkable is said that there is room to say. And of the minster, this is the most remarkable thing that I could hear it, namely, that some of it is so ancient, totters so much with every gust of wind, looks so like a decay, and seems so near it, that whenever it does fall, all that it is likely will be thought strange in it will be that it did not fall a hundred years sooner.

From hence we came over the Ouse, and in a few miles to Newmarket. In our way, near Snaybell, we saw a noble seat of the late Admiral Russell, now Earl of Orford, a name made famous by the glorious victory obtained under his command over the French fleet and the burning their ships at La Hogue--a victory equal in glory to, and infinitely more glorious to the English nation in particular, than that at Blenheim, and, above all, more to the particular advantage of the confederacy, because it so broke the heart of the naval power of France that they have not fully recovered it to this day. But of this victory it must be said it was owing to the haughty, rash, and insolent orders given by the King of France to his admiral, viz., to fight the confederate fleet wherever he found them, without leaving room for him to use due caution if he found them too strong, which pride of France was doubtless a fate upon them, and gave a cheap victory to the confederates, the French coming down rashly, and with the most impolitic bravery, with about five-and-forty sail to attack between seventy and eighty sail, by which means they met their ruin. Whereas, had their own fleet been joined, it might have cost more blood to have mastered them if it had been done at all.

The situation of this house is low, and on the edge of the fen country, but the building is very fine, the avenues noble, and the gardens perfectly finished. The apartments also are rich, and I see nothing wanting but a family and heirs to sustain the glory and inheritance of the illustrious ancestor who raised it--sed caret pedibus; these are wanting.

Being come to Newmarket in the month of October, I had the opportunity to see the horse races and a great concourse of the nobility and gentry, as well from London as from all parts of England, but they were all so intent, so eager, so busy upon the sharpening part of the sport--their wagers and bets--that to me they seemed just as so many horse-coursers in Smithfield, descending (the greatest of them) from their high dignity and quality to

picking one another's pockets, and biting one another as much as possible, and that with such eagerness as that it might be said they acted without respect to faith, honour, or good manners.

There was Mr. Frampton the oldest, and, as some say, the cunningest jockey in England; one day he lost one thousand guineas, the next he won two thousand; and so alternately he made as light of throwing away five hundred or one thousand pounds at a time as other men do of their pocket-money, and as perfectly calm, cheerful, and unconcerned when he had lost one thousand pounds as when he had won it. On the other side there was Sir R Fagg, of Sussex, of whom fame says he has the most in him and the least to show for it (relating to jockeyship) of any man there, yet he often carried the prize. His horses, they said, were all cheats, how honest soever their master was, for he scarce ever produced a horse but he looked like what he was not, and was what nobody could expect him to be. If he was as light as the wind, and could fly like a meteor, he was sure to look as clumsy, and as dirty, and as much like a cart-horse as all the cunning of his master and the grooms could make him, and just in this manner he beat some of the greatest gamesters in the field.

I was so sick of the jockeying part that I left the crowd about the posts and pleased myself with observing the horses: how the creatures yielded to all the arts and managements of their masters; how they took their airings in sport, and played with the daily heats which they ran over the course before the grand day. But how, as knowing the difference equally with their riders, would they exert their utmost strength at the time of the race itself! And that to such an extremity that one or two of them died in the stable when they came to be rubbed after the first heat.

Here I fancied myself in the Circus Maximus at Rome seeing the ancient games and the racings of the chariots and horsemen, and in this warmth of my imagination I pleased and diverted myself more and in a more noble manner than I could possibly do in the crowds of gentlemen at the weighing and starting-posts and at their coming in, or at their meetings at the coffee-houses and gaming-tables after the races were over, where there was little or nothing to be seen but what was the subject of just reproach to them and reproof from every wise man that looked upon them.

N.B.--Pray take it with you, as you go, you see no ladies at Newmarket, except a few of the neighbouring gentlemen's families, who come in their coaches on any particular day to see a race, and so go home again directly.

As I was pleasing myself with what was to be seen here, I went in the intervals of the sport to see the fine seats of the gentlemen in the neighbouring county, for this part of Suffolk, being an open champaign country and a healthy air, is formed for pleasure and all kinds of country diversion, Nature, as it were, inviting the gentlemen to visit her where she was fully prepared to receive them, in conformity to which kind summons they came, for the country is, as it were, covered with fine palaces of the nobility and pleasant seats of the gentlemen.

The Earl of Orford's house I have mentioned already; the next is Euston Hall, the seat of the Duke of Grafton. It lies in the open country towards the side of Norfolk, not far from Thetford, a place capable of all that is pleasant and delightful in Nature, and improved by art to every extreme that Nature is able to produce.

From thence I went to Rushbrook, formerly the seat of the noble family of Jermyns, lately Lord Dover, and now of the house of Davers. Here Nature, for the time I was there, drooped and veiled all the beauties of which she once boasted, the family being in tears and the house shut up, Sir Robert Davers, the head thereof, and knight of the shire for the county of Suffolk, and who had married the eldest daughter of the late Lord Dover, being just dead, and the corpse lying there in its funeral form of ceremony, not yet buried. Yet all looked lovely in their sorrow, and a numerous issue promising and grown up intimated that the family of Davers would still flourish, and that the beauties of Rushbrook, the mansion of the family, were not formed with so much art in vain or to die with the present possessor.

After this we saw Brently, the seat of the Earl of Dysert, and the ancient palace of my Lord Cornwallis, with several others of exquisite situation, and adorned with the beauties both of art and Nature, so that I think any traveller from abroad, who would desire to see how the English gentry live, and what pleasures they enjoy, should come into Suffolk and Cambridgeshire, and take but a light circuit among the country seats of the gentlemen on this side only, and they would be soon convinced that not France, no, not Italy itself, can outdo them in proportion to the climate they lived in.

I had still the county of Cambridge to visit to complete this tour of the eastern part of England, and of that I come now to speak.

We enter Cambridgeshire out of Suffolk, with all the advantage in the world; the county beginning upon those pleasant and agreeable plains called Newmarket Heath, where passing the Devil's Ditch, which has nothing worth notice but its name, and that but fabulous too, from the hills called Gogmagog, we see a rich and pleasant vale westward, covered with corn-fields, gentlemen's seats, villages, and at a distance, to crown all the rest, that ancient and truly famous town and university of Cambridge, capital of the county, and receiving its name from, if not, as some say, giving name to it; for if it be true that the town takes its name of Cambridge from its bridge over the river Cam, then certainly the shire or county, upon the division of England into counties, had its name from the town, and Cambridgeshire signifies no more or less than the county of which Cambridge is the capital town.

As my business is not to lay out the geographical situation of places, I say nothing of the buttings and boundings of this county. It lies on the edge of the great level, called by the people here the Fen Country; and great part, if not all, the Isle of Ely lies in this county and Norfolk. The rest of Cambridgeshire is almost wholly a corn country, and of that corn five parts in six of all they sow is barley, which is generally sold to Ware and Royston, and other great malting towns in Hertfordshire, and is the fund from whence that vast quantity of malt, called Hertfordshire malt,

is made, which is esteemed the best in England. As Essex, Suffolk, and Norfolk are taken up in manufactures, and famed for industry, this county has no manufacture at all; nor are the poor, except the husbandmen, famed for anything so much as idleness and sloth, to their scandal be it spoken. What the reason of it is I know not.

It is scarce possible to talk of anything in Cambridgeshire but Cambridge itself; whether it be that the county has so little worth speaking of in it, or, that the town has so much, that I leave to others; however, as I am making modern observations, not writing history, I shall look into the county, as well as into the colleges, for what I have to say.

As I said, I first had a view of Cambridge from Gogmagog hills; I am to add that there appears on the mountain that goes by this name, an ancient camp or fortification, that lies on the top of the hill, with a double, or rather treble, rampart and ditch, which most of our writers say was neither Roman nor Saxon, but British. I am to add that King James II. caused a spacious stable to be built in the area of this camp for his running homes, and made old Mr. Frampton, whom I mentioned above, master or inspector of them. The stables remain still there, though they are not often made use of. As we descended westward we saw the Fen country on our right, almost all covered with water like a sea, the Michaelmas rains having been very great that year, they had sent down great floods of water from the upland countries, and those fens being, as may be very properly said, the sink of no less than thirteen counties-- that is to say, that all the water, or most part of the water, of thirteen counties falls into them; they are often thus overflowed. The rivers which thus empty themselves into these fens, and which thus carry off the water, are the Cam or Grant, the Great Ouse and Little Ouse, the Nene, the Welland, and the river which runs from Bury to Milden Hall. The counties which these rivers drain, as above, are as follows:-

Lincoln, Warwick, Norfolk,
* Cambridge, Oxford, Suffolk,
* Huntingdon, Leicester, Essex,
* Bedford, * Northampton
Buckingham, * Rutland.

Those marked with (*) empty all their waters this way, the rest but in part.

In a word, all the water of the middle part of England which does not run into the Thames or the Trent, comes down into these fens.

In these fens are abundance of those admirable pieces of art called decoys that is to say, places so adapted for the harbour and shelter of wild fowl, and then furnished with a breed of those they call decoy ducks, who are taught to allure and entice their kind to the places they belong to, that it is incredible what quantities of wild fowl of all sorts, duck, mallard, teal, widgeon, &c., they take in those decoys every week during the season; it may, indeed, be guessed at a little by this, that there is a decoy not far from

Ely which pays to the landlord, Sir Thomas Hare, 500 pounds a year rent, besides the charge of maintaining a great number of servants for the management; and from which decoy alone, they assured me at St. Ives (a town on the Ouse, where the fowl they took was always brought to be sent to London) that they generally sent up three thousand couple a week.

There are more of these about Peterborough, who send the fowl up twice a week in waggon-loads at a time, whose waggons before the late Act of Parliament to regulate carriers I have seen drawn by ten and twelve horses a-piece, they were laden so heavy.

As these fens appear covered with water, so I observed, too, that they generally at this latter part of the year appear also covered with fogs, so that when the downs and higher grounds of the adjacent country were gilded with the beams of the sun, the Isle of Ely looked as if wrapped up in blankets, and nothing to be seen but now and then the lantern or cupola of Ely Minster.

One could hardly see this from the hills and not pity the many thousands of families that were bound to or confined in those fogs, and had no other breath to draw than what must be mixed with those vapours, and that steam which so universally overspreads the country. But notwithstanding this, the people, especially those that are used to it, live unconcerned, and as healthy as other folks, except now and then an ague, which they make light of, and there are great numbers of very ancient people among them.

I now draw near to Cambridge, to which I fancy I look as if I was afraid to come, having made so many circumlocutions beforehand; but I must yet make another digression before I enter the town (for in my way, and as I came in from Newmarket, about the beginning of September), I cannot omit, that I came necessarily through Stourbridge Fair, which was then in its height.

If it is a diversion worthy a book to treat of trifles, such as the gaiety of Bury Fair, it cannot be very unpleasant, especially to the trading part of the world, to say something of this fair, which is not only the greatest in the whole nation, but in the world; nor, if I may believe those who have seen the mall, is the fair at Leipzig in Saxony, the mart at Frankfort-on-the-Main, or the fairs at Nuremberg, or Augsburg, any way to compare to this fair at Stourbridge.

It is kept in a large corn-field, near Casterton, extending from the side of the river Cam, towards the road, for about half a mile square.

If the husbandmen who rent the land, do not get their corn off before a certain day in August, the fair-keepers may trample it under foot and spoil it to build their booths, or tents, for all the fair is kept in tents and booths. On the other hand, to balance that severity, if the fair-keepers have not done their business of the fair, and removed and cleared the field by another certain day in September, the ploughmen may come in again, with plough and cart, and overthrow all, and trample into the dirt; and as for the filth, dung, straw, etc. necessarily left by the fair-

keepers, the quantity of which is very great, it is the farmers' fees, and makes them full amends for the trampling, riding, and carting upon, and hardening the ground.

It is impossible to describe all the parts and circumstances of this fair exactly; the shops are placed in rows like streets, whereof one is called Cheapside; and here, as in several other streets, are all sorts of trades, who sell by retail, and who come principally from London with their goods; scarce any trades are omitted--goldsmiths, toyshops, brasiers, turners, milliners, haberdashers, hatters, mercers, drapers, pewterers, china-warehouses, and in a word all trades that can be named in London; with coffee-houses, taverns, brandy-shops, and eating-houses, innumerable, and all in tents, and booths, as above.

This great street reaches from the road, which as I said goes from Cambridge to Newmarket, turning short out of it to the right towards the river, and holds in a line near half a mile quite down to the river-side: in another street parallel with the road are like rows of booths, but larger, and more intermingled with wholesale dealers; and one side, passing out of this last street to the left hand, is a formal great square, formed by the largest booths, built in that form, and which they call the Duddery; whence the name is derived, and what its signification is, I could never yet learn, though I made all possible search into it. The area of this square is about 80 to 100 yards, where the dealers have room before every booth to take down, and open their packs, and to bring in waggons to load and unload.

This place is separated, and peculiar to the wholesale dealers in the woollen manufacture. Here the booths or tents are of a vast extent, have different apartments, and the quantities of goods they bring are so great, that the insides of them look like another Blackwell Hall, being as vast warehouses piled up with goods to the top. In this Duddery, as I have been informed, there have been sold one hundred thousand pounds worth of woollen manufactures in less than a week's time, besides the prodigious trade carried on here, by wholesale men, from London, and all parts of England, who transact their business wholly in their pocket-books, and meeting their chapmen from all parts, make up their accounts, receive money chiefly in bills, and take orders: These they say exceed by far the sales of goods actually brought to the fair, and delivered in kind; it being frequent for the London wholesale men to carry back orders from their dealers for ten thousand pounds' worth of goods a man, and some much more. This especially respects those people, who deal in heavy goods, as wholesale grocers, salters, brasiers, iron-merchants, wine-merchants, and the like; but does not exclude the dealers in woollen manufactures, and especially in mercery goods of all sorts, the dealers in which generally manage their business in this manner.

Here are clothiers from Halifax, Leeds, Wakefield and Huddersfield in Yorkshire, and from Rochdale, Bury, etc., in Lancashire, with vast quantities of Yorkshire cloths, kerseys, pennistons, cottons, etc., with all sorts of Manchester ware, fustians, and things made of cotton wool; of which the quantity is so great, that they told me there were near a thousand horse-packs of such goods from that

side of the country, and these took up a side and half of the Duddery at least; also a part of a street of booths were taken up with upholsterer's ware, such as tickings, sackings, kidderminster stuffs, blankets, rugs, quilts, etc.

In the Duddery I saw one warehouse, or booth with six apartments in it, all belonging to a dealer in Norwich stuffs only, and who, they said, had there above twenty thousand pounds value in those goods, and no other.

Western goods had their share here also, and several booths were filled as full with serges, duroys, druggets, shalloons, cantaloons, Devonshire kerseys, etc., from Exeter, Taunton, Bristol, and other parts west, and some from London also.

But all this is still outdone at least in show, by two articles, which are the peculiars of this fair, and do not begin till the other part of the fair, that is to say for the woollen manufacture begins to draw to a close. These are the wool and the hops; as for the hops, there is scarce any price fixed for hops in England, till they know how they sell at Stourbridge fair; the quantity that appears in the fair is indeed prodigious, and they, as it were, possess a large part of the field on which the fair is kept to themselves; they are brought directly from Chelmsford in Essex, from Canterbury and Maidstone in Kent, and from Farnham in Surrey, besides what are brought from London, the growth of those and other places.

Enquiring why this fair should be thus, of all other places in England, the centre of that trade; and so great a quantity of so bulky a commodity be carried thither so far; I was answered by one thoroughly acquainted with that matter thus: the hops, said he, for this part of England, grow principally in the two counties of Surrey and Kent, with an exception only to the town of Chelmsford in Essex, and there are very few planted anywhere else.

There are indeed in the west of England some quantities growing: as at Wilton, near Salisbury; at Hereford and Broomsgrove, near Wales, and the like; but the quantity is inconsiderable, and the places remote, so that none of them come to London.

As to the north of England, they formerly used but few hops there, their drink being chiefly pale smooth ale, which required no hops, and consequently they planted no hops in all that part of England, north of the Trent; nor did I ever see one acre of hop-ground planted beyond Trent in my observation; but as for some years past, they not only brew great quantities of beer in the north, but also use hops in the brewing their ale much more than they did before; so they all come south of Trent to buy their hops; and here being quantities brought, it is great part of their back carriage into Yorkshire, and Northamptonshire, Derbyshire, Lancashire, and all these counties; nay, of late, since the Union, even to Scotland itself; for I must not omit here also to mention, that the river Grant, or Cam, which runs close by the north-west side of the fair in its way from Cambridge to Ely, is navigable, and that by this means, all heavy goods are brought even to the fair-field, by water carriage from London and other parts; first to the port of Lynn,

and then in barges up the Ouse, from the Ouse into the Cam, and so, as I say, to the very edge of the fair.

In like manner great quantities of heavy goods, and the hops among the rest, are sent from the fair to Lynn by water, and shipped there for the Humber, to Hull, York, etc., and for Newcastle-upon-Tyne, and by Newcastle, even to Scotland itself. Now as there is still no planting of hops in the north, though a great consumption, and the consumption increasing daily, this, says my friend, is one reason why at Stourbridge fair there is so great a demand for the hops. He added, that besides this, there were very few hops, if any worth naming, growing in all the counties even on this side Trent, which were above forty miles from London; those counties depending on Stourbridge fair for their supply, so the counties of Suffolk, Norfolk, Cambridge, Huntingdon, Northampton, Lincoln, Leicester, Rutland, and even to Stafford, Warwick, and Worcestershire, bought most if not all of their hops at Stourbridge fair.

These are the reasons why so great a quantity of hops are seen at this fair, as that it is incredible, considering, too, how remote from this fair the growth of them is as above.

This is likewise a testimony of the prodigious resort of the trading people of all parts of England to this fair; the quantity of hops that have been sold at one of these fairs is diversely reported, and some affirm it to be so great, that I dare not copy after them; but without doubt it is a surprising account, especially in a cheap year.

The next article brought thither is wool, and this of several sorts, but principally fleece wool, out of Lincolnshire, where the longest staple is found; the sheep of those countries being of the largest breed.

The buyers of this wool are chiefly indeed the manufacturers of Norfolk and Suffolk and Essex, and it is a prodigious quantity they buy.

Here I saw what I have not observed in any other county of England, namely, a pocket of wool. This seems to be first called so in mockery, this pocket being so big, that it loads a whole waggon, and reaches beyond the most extreme parts of it hanging over both before and behind, and these ordinarily weigh a ton or twenty-five hundredweight of wool, all in one bag.

The quantity of wool only, which has been sold at this place at one fair, has been said to amount to fifty or sixty thousand pounds in value, some say a great deal more.

By these articles a stranger may make some guess at the immense trade carried on at this place; what prodigious quantities of goods are bought and sold here, and what a confluence of people are seen here from all parts of England.

I might go on here to speak of several other sorts of English manufactures which are brought hither to be sold; as all sorts of

wrought-iron and brass-ware from Birmingham; edged tools, knives, etc., from Sheffield; glass wares and stockings from Nottingham and Leicester; and an infinite throng of other things of smaller value every morning.

To attend this fair, and the prodigious conflux of people which come to it, there are sometimes no less than fifty hackney coaches which come from London, and ply night and morning to carry the people to and from Cambridge; for there the gross of the people lodge; nay, which is still more strange, there are wherries brought from London on waggons to ply upon the little river Cam, and to row people up and down from the town, and from the fair as occasion presents.

It is not to be wondered at, if the town of Cambridge cannot receive, or entertain the numbers of people that come to this fair; not Cambridge only, but all the towns round are full; nay, the very barns and stables are turned into inns, and made as fit as they can to lodge the meaner sort of people: as for the people in the fair, they all universally eat, drink, and sleep in their booths and tents; and the said booths are so intermingled with taverns, coffee-houses, drinking-houses, eating-houses, cook-shops, etc., and all in tents too; and so many butchers and higgleries from all the neighbouring counties come into the fair every morning with beef, mutton, fowls, butter, bread, cheese, eggs, and such things, and go with them from tent to tent, from door to door, that there is no want of any provisions of any kind, either dressed or undressed.

In a word, the fair is like a well-fortified city, and there is the least disorder and confusion I believe, that can be seen anywhere with so great a concourse of people.

Towards the latter end of the fair, and when the great hurry of wholesale business begins to be over, the gentry come in from all parts of the county round; and though they come for their diversion, yet it is not a little money they lay out, which generally falls to the share of the retailers, such as toy-shops, goldsmiths, braziers, ironmongers, turners, milliners, mercers, etc., and some loose coins they reserve for the puppet shows, drolls, rope-dancers, and such like, of which there is no want, though not considerable like the rest. The last day of the fair is the horse-fair, where the whole is closed with both horse and foot races, to divert the meaner sort of people only, for nothing considerable is offered of that kind. Thus ends the whole fair, and in less than a week more, there is scarce any sign left that there has been such a thing there, except by the heaps of dung and straw and other rubbish which is left behind, trod into the earth, and which is as good as a summer's fallow for dunging the land; and as I have said above, pays the husbandman well for the use of it.

I should have mentioned that here is a court of justice always open, and held every day in a shed built on purpose in the fair; this is for keeping the peace, and deciding controversies in matters deriving from the business of the fair. The magistrates of the town of Cambridge are judges in this court, as being in their jurisdiction, or they holding it by special privilege: here they

determine matters in a summary way, as is practised in those we call Pye Powder Courts in other places, or as a Court of Conscience; and they have a final authority without appeal.

I come now to the town and university of Cambridge; I say the town and university, for though they are blended together in the situation, and the colleges, halls, and houses for literature are promiscuously scattered up and down among the other parts, and some even among the meanest of the other buildings, as Magdalene College over the bridge is in particular; yet they are all incorporated together by the name of the university, and are governed apart and distinct from the town which they are so intermixed with.

As their authority is distinct from the town, so are their privileges, customs, and government; they choose representatives, or members of Parliament for themselves, and the town does the like for themselves, also apart.

The town is governed by a mayor and aldermen; the university by a chancellor, and vice-chancellor, etc. Though their dwellings are mixed, and seem a little confused, their authority is not so; in some cases the vice-chancellor may concern himself in the town, as in searching houses for the scholars at improper hours, removing scandalous women, and the like.

But as the colleges are many, and the gentlemen entertained in them are a very great number, the trade of the town very much depends upon them, and the tradesmen may justly be said to get their bread by the colleges; and this is the surest hold the university may be said to have of the townsmen, and by which they secure the dependence of the town upon them, and consequently their submission.

I remember some years ago a brewer, who being very rich and popular in the town, and one of their magistrates, had in several things so much opposed the university, and insulted their vice-chancellor, or other heads of houses, that in short the university having no other way to exert themselves, and show their resentment, they made a bye-law or order among themselves, that for the future they would not trade with him; and that none of the colleges, halls, etc., would take any more beer of him; and what followed? The man indeed braved it out a while, but when he found he could not obtain a revocation of the order, he was fain to leave off his brewhouse, and if I remember right, quitted the town.

Thus I say, interest gives them authority; and there are abundance of reasons why the town should not disoblige the university, as there are some also on the other hand, why the university should not differ to any extremity with the town; nor, such is their prudence, do they let any disputes between them run up to any extremities if they can avoid it. As for society; to any man who is a lover of learning, or of learned men, here is the most agreeable under heaven; nor is there any want of mirth and good company of other kinds; but it is to the honour of the university to say, that the governors so well understand their office, and the governed their duty, that here is very little encouragement given to those seminaries of crime, the assemblies, which are so much

boasted of in other places.

Again, as dancing, gaming, intriguing are the three principal articles which recommend those assemblies; and that generally the time for carrying on affairs of this kind is the night, and sometimes all night, a time as unseasonable as scandalous; add to this, that the orders of the university admit no such excesses; I therefore say, as this is the case, it is to the honour of the whole body of the university that no encouragement is given to them here.

As to the antiquity of the university in this town, the originals and founders of the several colleges, their revenues, laws, government, and governors, they are so effectually and so largely treated of by other authors, and are so foreign to the familiar design of these letters, that I refer my readers to Mr. Camden's "Britannia" and the author of the "Antiquities of Cambridge," and other such learned writers, by whom they may be fully informed.

The present Vice-Chancellor is Dr. Snape, formerly Master of Eaton School near Windsor, and famous for his dispute with, and evident advantage over, the late Bishop of Bangor in the time of his government; the dispute between the University and the Master of Trinity College has been brought to a head so as to employ the pens of the learned on both sides, but at last prosecuted in a judicial way so as to deprive Dr. Bentley of all his dignities and offices in the university; but the doctor flying to the royal protection, the university is under a writ of mandamus, to show cause why they do not restore the doctor again, to which it seems they demur, and that demur has not, that we hear, been argued, at least when these sheets were sent to the press. What will be the issue time must show.

From Cambridge the road lies north-west on the edge of the fens to Huntingdon, where it joins the great north road. On this side it is all an agreeable corn country as above, adorned with several seats of gentlemen; but the chief is the noble house, seat, or mansion of Wimble or Wimble Hall, formerly built at a vast expense by the late Earl of Radnor, adorned with all the natural beauties of situation, and to which was added all the most exquisite contrivances which the best heads could invent to make it artificially as well as naturally pleasant.

However, the fate of the Radnor family so directing, it was bought with the whole estate about it by the late Duke of Newcastle, in a partition of whose immense estate it fell to the Right Honourable the Lord Harley, son and heir-apparent of the present Earl of Oxford and Mortimer, in right of the Lady Harriet Cavendish, only daughter of the said Duke of Newcastle, who is married to his lordship, and brought him this estate and many other, sufficient to denominate her the richest heiress in Great Britain.

Here his lordship resides, and has already so recommended himself to this county as to be by a great majority chosen Knight of the Shire for the county of Cambridge.

From Cambridge, my design obliging me, and the direct road in part

concurring, I came back through the west part of the county of Essex, and at Saffron Walden I saw the ruins of the once largest and most magnificent pile in all this part of England--viz., Audley End--built by, and decaying with, the noble Dukes and Earls of Suffolk.

A little north of this part of the country rises the River Stour, which for a course of fifty miles or more parts the two counties of Suffolk and Essex, passing through or near Haveril, Clare, Cavendish, Halsted, Sudbury, Bowers, Nayland, Stretford, Dedham, Manningtree, and into the sea at Harwich, assisting by its waters to make one of the best harbours for shipping that is in Great Britain--I mean Orwell Haven or Harwich, of which I have spoken largely already.

As we came on this side we saw at a distance Braintree and Bocking, two towns, large, rich, and populous, and made so originally by the bay trade, of which I have spoken at large at Colchester, and which flourishes still among them.

The manor of Braintree I found descended by purchase to the name of Olmeus, the son of a London merchant of the same name, making good what I had observed before, of the great number of such who have purchased estates in this county.

Near this town is Felsted, a small place, but noted for a free school of an ancient foundation, for many years under the mastership of the late Rev. Mr. Lydiat, and brought by him to the meridian of its reputation. It is now supplied, and that very worthily, by the Rev. Mr. Hutchins.

Near to this is the Priory of Lees, a delicious seat of the late Dukes of Manchester, but sold by the present Duke to the Duchess Dowager of Bucks, his Grace the Duke of Manchester removing to his yet finer seat of Kimbolton in Northamptonshire, the ancient mansion of the family. From hence keeping the London Road I came to Chelmsford, mentioned before, and Ingerstone, five miles west, which I mention again, because in the parish church of this town are to be seen the ancient monuments of the noble family of Petre, whose seat and large estate lie in the neighbourhood, and whose whole family, by a constant series of beneficent actions to the poor, and bounty upon all charitable occasions, have gained an affectionate esteem through all that part of the country such as no prejudice of religion could wear out, or perhaps ever may; and I must confess, I think, need not, for good and great actions command our respect, let the opinions of the persons be otherwise what they will.

From hence we crossed the country to the great forest, called Epping Forest, reaching almost to London. The country on that side of Essex is called the Roodings, I suppose, because there are no less than ten towns almost together, called by the name of Roding, and is famous for good land, good malt, and dirty roads; the latter indeed in the winter are scarce passable for horse or man. In the midst of this we see Chipping Onger, Hatfield Broad Oak, Epping, and many forest towns, famed as I have said for husbandry and good malt, but of no other note. On the south side of the county is

Waltham Abbey; the ruins of the abbey remain, and though antiquity is not my proper business, I could not but observe that King Harold, slain in the great battle in Sussex against William the Conqueror, lies buried here; his body being begged by his mother, the Conqueror allowed it to be carried hither; but no monument was, as I can find, built for him, only a flat gravestone, on which was engraven Harold Infelix.

From hence I came over the forest again--that is to say, over the lower or western part of it, where it is spangled with fine villages, and these villages filled with fine seats, most of them built by the citizens of London, as I observed before, but the lustre of them seems to be entirely swallowed up in the magnificent palace of the Lord Castlemain, whose father, Sir Josiah Child, as it were, prepared it in his life for the design of his son, though altogether unforeseen, by adding to the advantage of its situation innumerable rows of trees, planted in curious order for avenues and vistas to the house, all leading up to the place where the old house stood, as to a centre.

In the place adjoining, his lordship, while he was yet Sir Richard Child only, and some years before he began the foundation of his new house, laid out the most delicious, as well as most spacious, pieces of ground for gardens that is to be seen in all this part of England. The greenhouse is an excellent building, fit to entertain a prince; it is furnished with stoves and artificial places for heat from an apartment in which is a bagnio and other conveniences, which render it both useful and pleasant. And these gardens have been so the just admiration of the world, that it has been the general diversion of the citizens to go out to see them, till the crowds grew too great, and his lordship was obliged to restrain his servants from showing them, except on one or two days in a week only.

The house is built since these gardens have been finished. The building is all of Portland stone in the front, which makes it look extremely glorious and magnificent at a distance, it being the particular property of that stone (except in the streets of London, where it is tainted and tinged with the smoke of the city) to grow whiter and whiter the longer it stands in the open air.

As the front of the house opens to a long row of trees, reaching to the great road at Leightonstone, so the back face, or front (if that be proper), respects the gardens, and, with an easy descent, lands you upon the terrace, from whence is a most beautiful prospect to the river, which is all formed into canals and openings to answer the views from above and beyond the river; the walks and wildernesses go on to such a distance, and in such a manner up the hill, as they before went down, that the sight is lost in the woods adjoining, and it looks all like one planted garden as far as the eye can see.

I shall cover as much as possible the melancholy part of a story which touches too sensibly many, if not most, of the great and flourishing families in England. Pity and matter of grief is it to think that families, by estate able to appear in such a glorious posture as this, should ever be vulnerable by so mean a disaster as

that of stock-jobbing. But the general infatuation of the day is a plea for it, so that men are not now blamed on that account. South Sea was a general possession, and if my Lord Castlemain was wounded by that arrow shot in the dark it was a misfortune. But it is so much a happiness that it was not a mortal wound, as it was to some men who once seemed as much out of the reach of it. And that blow, be it what it will, is not remembered for joy of the escape, for we see this noble family, by prudence and management, rise out of all that cloud, if it may be allowed such a name, and shining in the same full lustre as before.

This cannot be said of some other families in this county, whose fine parks and new-built palaces are fallen under forfeitures and alienations by the misfortunes of the times and by the ruin of their masters' fortunes in that South Sea deluge.

But I desire to throw a veil over these things as they come in my way; it is enough that we write upon them, as was written upon King Harold's tomb at Waltham Abbey, Infelix, and let all the rest sleep among things that are the fittest to be forgotten.

From my Lord Castlemain's, house and the rest of the fine dwellings on that side of the forest, for there are several very good houses at Wanstead, only that they seem all swallowed up in the lustre of his lordship's palace, I say, from thence, I went south, towards the great road over that part of the forest called the Flats, where we see a very beautiful but retired and rural seat of Mr. Lethulier's, eldest son of the late Sir John Lethulier, of Lusum, in Kent, of whose family I shall speak when I come on that side.

By this turn I came necessarily on to Stratford, where I set out. And thus having finished my first circuit, I conclude my first letter, and am,

Sir, your most humble and obedient servant.

APPENDIX

Whoever travels, as I do, over England, and writes the account of his observations, will, as I noted before, always leave something, altering or undertaking by such a growing improving nation as this, or something to discover in a nation where so much is hid, sufficient to employ the pens of those that come after him, or to add by way of appendix to what he has already observed.

This is my case with respect to the particulars which follow: (1) Since these sheets were in the press, a noble palace of Mr. Walpole's, at present First Commissioner of the Treasury, Privy-counsellor, etc., to King George, is, as it were, risen out of the ruins of the ancient seat of the family of Walpole, at Houghton, about eight miles distant from Lynn, and on the north coast of Norfolk, near the sea.

As the house is not yet finished, and when I passed by it was but newly designed, it cannot be expected that I should be able to give a particular description of what it will be. I can do little more than mention that it appears already to be exceedingly magnificent, and suitable to the genius of the great founder.

But a friend of mine, who lives in that county, has sent me the following lines, which, as he says, are to be placed upon the building, whether on the frieze of the cornice, or over the portico, or on what part of the building, of that I am not as yet certain. The inscription is as follows, viz.:-

"H. M. F.

"Fundamen ut essem Domus
In Agro Natali Extrudae,
Robertus ille Walpole
Quem nulla nesciet Posteritas:

Faxit Dues.

"Postquam Maturus Annis Dominus.
Diu Laetatus fuerit absoluta
Incolumem tueantur Incolames.
Ad Summam omnium Diem
Et nati natorum et qui nascentur ab illis.

Hic me Posuit."

A second thing proper to be added here, by way of appendix, relates to what I have mentioned of the Port of London, being bounded by the Naze on the Essex shore, and the North Foreland on the Kentish shore, which some people, guided by the present usage of the Custom House, may pretend is not so, to answer such objectors. The true state of that case stands thus:

"(1) The clause taken from the Act of Parliament establishing the extent of the Port of London, and published in some of the books of rates, is this:

"To prevent all future differences and disputes touching the extent and limits of the Port of London, the said port is declared to extend, and be accounted from the promontory or point called the North Foreland in the Isle of Thanet, and from thence northward in a right line to the point called the Naze, beyond the Gunfleet upon the coast of Essex, and so continued westward throughout the river Thames, and the several channels, streams, and rivers falling into it, to London Bridge, saving the usual and known rights, liberties, and privileges of the ports of Sandwich and Ipswich, and either of them, and the known members thereof, and of the customers, comptrollers, searchers, and their deputies, of and within the said ports of Sandwich and Ipswich and the several creeks, harbours, and havens to them, or either of them, respectively belonging, within the counties of Kent and Essex.'

"II. Notwithstanding what is above written, the Port of London, as in use since the said order, is understood to reach no farther than Gravesend in Kent and Tilbury Point in Essex, and the ports of Rochester, Milton, and Faversham belong to the port of Sandwich.

"In like manner the ports of Harwich, Colchester, Wivenhoe, Malden, Leigh, etc., are said to be members of the port of Ipswich."

This observation may suffice for what is needful to be said upon the same subject when I may come to speak of the port of Sandwich and its members and their privileges with respect to Rochester, Milton, Faversham, etc., in my circuit through the county of Kent.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK, TOUR THROUGH THE EASTERN COUNTIES ***

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BEOWULF
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BEOWULF
PRELUDE OF THE FOUNDER OF THE DANISH HOUSE

LO, 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 Scefing from squadroned foes,
from many a tribe, the mead-bench tore,
awing the earls. Since erst he lay
friendless, a foundling, fate repaid him:
for he waxed under welkin, in wealth he throve,
till before him the folk, both far and near,
who house by the whale-path, heard his mandate,
gave him gifts: a good king he!
To him 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: {0a} far flew the boast of him,
son of Scyld, in the Scandian lands.
So becomes it a youth to quit him well
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, outbound, atheling's barge:
there laid they down their darling lord
on the breast of the boat, the breaker-of-rings, {0b}
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!

Now Beowulf bode in the burg of the Scyldings,
leader beloved, and long he ruled
in fame with all folk, since his father had gone
away from the world, till awoke 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, children four:
Heorogar, then Hrothgar, then Halga brave;
and I heard that -- was -- 's queen,
the Heathoscylfing'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 commanded,
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 {1a} he named it
whose message had might in many a land.
Not reckless of promise, the rings he dealt,
treasure at banquet: there towered the hall,
high, gabled wide, the hot surge waiting
of furious flame. {1b} Nor far was that day
when father and son-in-law stood in feud
for warfare and hatred that woke again. {1c}
With envy and anger an evil spirit
endured the dole in his dark abode,
that he heard each day the din of revel
high in the hall: there harps rang out,
clear song of the singer. He sang who knew {1d}
tales of the early time of man,
how the Almighty made the earth,
fairest fields enfolded by water,
set, triumphant, sun and moon
for a light to lighten the land-dwellers,
and braided 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 began
to fashion evils, that field of hell.
Grendel this monster grim was called,
march-riever {1e} mighty, in moorland 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 God for slaughtered Abel.

III fared his feud, {1f} and far was he driven,
for the slaughter's sake, from sight of men.
Of Cain awoke all that woful breed,
Etins {1g} and elves and evil-spirits,
as well as the giants that warred with God
weary while: but their wage was paid them!

II

WENT he forth to find at fall of night
that haughty house, and heed wherever
the Ring-Danes, outrevelled, to rest had gone.
Found within it the atheling band
asleep after feasting and fearless of sorrow,
of human hardship. Unhallowed wight,
grim and greedy, he grasped betimes,
wrathful, reckless, from resting-places,
thirty of the thanes, and thence he rushed
fain of his fell spoil, faring homeward,
laden with slaughter, his lair to seek.
Then at the dawning, as day was breaking,
the might of Grendel to men was known;
then after wassail was wail uplifted,
loud moan in the morn. The mighty chief,
atheling excellent, unblithe sat,
labored in woe for the loss of his thanes,
when once had been traced the trail of the fiend,
spirit accurst: too cruel that sorrow,
too long, too loathsome. Not late the respite;
with night returning, anew began
ruthless murder; he recked no whit,
firm in his guilt, of the feud and crime.
They were easy to find who elsewhere sought
in room remote their rest at night,
bed in the bowers, {2a} when that bale was shown,
was seen in sooth, with surest token, --
the hall-thane's {2b} hate. Such held themselves
far and fast who the fiend outran!
Thus ruled unrighteous and raged his fill
one against all; until empty stood
that lordly building, and long it bode so.
Twelve years' tide the trouble he bore,
sovran of Scyldings, sorrows in plenty,
boundless cares. There came unhidden
tidings true to the tribes of men,
in sorrowful songs, how ceaselessly Grendel
harassed Hrothgar, what hate he bore him,
what murder and massacre, many a year,
feud unfading, -- refused consent
to deal with any of Daneland's earls,
make pact of peace, or compound for gold:
still less did the wise men ween to get
great fee for the feud from his fiendish hands.
But the evil one ambushed old and young
death-shadow dark, and dogged them still,

lured, or lurked in the livelong night
of misty moorlands: men may say not
where the haunts of these Hell-Runes {2c} be.
Such heaping of horrors the hater of men,
lonely roamer, wrought unceasing,
harassings heavy. O'er Heorot he lorded,
gold-bright hall, in gloomy nights;
and ne'er could the prince {2d} approach his throne,
-- 'twas judgment of God, -- or have joy in his hall.
Sore was the sorrow to Scyldings'-friend,
heart-rending misery. Many nobles
sat assembled, and searched out counsel
how it were best for bold-hearted men
against harassing terror to try their hand.
Whiles they vowed in their heathen fanes
altar-offerings, asked with words {2e}
that the slayer-of-souls would succor give them
for the pain of their people. Their practice this,
their heathen hope; 'twas Hell they thought of
in mood of their mind. Almighty they knew not,
Doomsman of Deeds and dreadful Lord,
nor Heaven's-Helmet heeded they ever,
Wielder-of-Wonder. -- Woe for that man
who in harm and hatred hales his soul
to fiery embraces; -- nor favor nor change
awaits he ever. But well for him
that after death-day may draw to his Lord,
and friendship find in the Father's arms!

III

THUS seethed unceasing the son of Healfdene
with the woe of these days; not wisest men
assuaged his sorrow; too sore the anguish,
loathly and long, that lay on his folk,
most baneful of burdens and bales of the night.

This heard in his home Hygelac's thane,
great among Geats, of Grendel's doings.
He was the mightiest man of valor
in that same day of this our life,
stalwart and stately. A stout wave-walker
he bade make ready. Yon battle-king, said he,
far o'er the swan-road he fain would seek,
the noble monarch who needed men!
The prince's journey by prudent folk
was little blamed, though they loved him dear;
they whetted the hero, and hailed good omens.
And now the bold one from bands of Geats
comrades chose, the keenest of warriors
e'er he could find; with fourteen men
the sea-wood {3a} he sought, and, sailor proved,
led them on to the land's confines.
Time had now flown; {3b} afloat was the ship,
boat under bluff. On board they climbed,

warriors ready; waves were churning
sea with sand; the sailors bore
on the breast of the bark their bright array,
their mail and weapons: the men pushed off,
on its willing way, the well-braced craft.
Then moved o'er the waters by might of the wind
that bark like a bird with breast of foam,
till in season due, on the second day,
the curved prow such course had run
that sailors now could see the land,
sea-cliffs shining, steep high hills,
headlands broad. Their haven was found,
their journey ended. Up then quickly
the Weders' {3c} clansmen climbed ashore,
anchored their sea-wood, with armor clashing
and gear of battle: God they thanked
or passing in peace o'er the paths of the sea.
Now saw from the cliff a Scylding clansman,
a warden that watched the water-side,
how they bore o'er the gangway glittering shields,
war-gear in readiness; wonder seized him
to know what manner of men they were.
Straight to the strand his steed he rode,
Hrothgar's henchman; with hand of might
he shook his spear, and spake in parley.
"Who are ye, then, ye armed men,
mailed folk, that yon mighty vessel
have urged thus over the ocean ways,
here o'er the waters? A warden I,
sentinel set o'er the sea-march here,
lest any foe to the folk of Danes
with harrying fleet should harm the land.
No aliens ever at ease thus bore them,
linden-wielders: {3d} yet word-of-leave
clearly ye lack from clansmen here,
my folk's agreement. -- A greater ne'er saw I
of warriors in world than is one of you, --
yon hero in harness! No henchman he
worthied by weapons, if witness his features,
his peerless presence! I pray you, though, tell
your folk and home, lest hence ye fare
suspect to wander your way as spies
in Danish land. Now, dwellers afar,
ocean-travellers, take from me
simple advice: the sooner the better
I hear of the country whence ye came."

IV

To him the stateliest spake in answer;
the warriors' leader his word-hoard unlocked: --
"We are by kin of the clan of Geats,
and Hygelac's own hearth-fellows we.
To folk afar was my father known,
noble atheling, Ecgtheow named.

Full of winters, he fared away
aged from earth; he is honored still
through width of the world by wise men all.
To thy lord and liege in loyal mood
we hasten hither, to Healfdene's son,
people-protector: be pleased to advise us!
To that mighty-one come we on mickle errand,
to the lord of the Danes; nor deem I right
that aught be hidden. We hear -- thou knowest
if sooth it is -- the saying of men,
that amid the Scyldings a scathing monster,
dark ill-doer, in dusky nights
shows terrific his rage unmatched,
hatred and murder. To Hrothgar I
in greatness of soul would succor bring,
so the Wise-and-Brave {4a} may worst his foes, --
if ever the end of ills is fated,
of cruel contest, if cure shall follow,
and the boiling care-waves cooler grow;
else ever afterward anguish-days
he shall suffer in sorrow while stands in place
high on its hill that house unpeered!"
Astride his steed, the strand-ward answered,
clansman unquailing: "The keen-souled thane
must be skilled to sever and sunder duly
words and works, if he well intends.
I gather, this band is graciously bent
to the Scyldings' master. March, then, bearing
weapons and weeds the way I show you.
I will bid my men your boat meanwhile
to guard for fear lest foemen come, --
your new-tarred ship by shore of ocean
faithfully watching till once again
it waft o'er the waters those well-loved thanes,
-- winding-neck'd wood, -- to Weders' bounds,
heroes such as the hest of fate
shall succor and save from the shock of war."
They bent them to march, -- the boat lay still,
fettered by cable and fast at anchor,
broad-bosomed ship. -- Then shone the boars {4b}
over the cheek-guard; chased with gold,
keen and gleaming, guard it kept
o'er the man of war, as marched along
heroes in haste, till the hall they saw,
broad of gable and bright with gold:
that was the fairest, 'mid folk of earth,
of houses 'neath heaven, where Hrothgar lived,
and the gleam of it lightened o'er lands afar.
The sturdy shieldsman showed that bright
burg-of-the-boldest; bade them go
straightway thither; his steed then turned,
hardy hero, and hailed them thus: --
"Tis time that I fare from you. Father Almighty
in grace and mercy guard you well,
safe in your seekings. Seaward I go,
'gainst hostile warriors hold my watch."

V

STONE-BRIGHT the street: {5a} it showed the way
to the crowd of clansmen. Corselets glistened
hand-forged, hard; on their harness bright
the steel ring sang, as they strode along
in mail of battle, and marched to the hall.
There, weary of ocean, the wall along
they set their bucklers, their broad shields, down,
and bowed them to bench: the breastplates clanged,
war-gear of men; their weapons stacked,
spears of the seafarers stood together,
gray-tipped ash: that iron band
was worthily weaponed! -- A warrior proud
asked of the heroes their home and kin.
"Whence, now, bear ye burnished shields,
harness gray and helmets grim,
spears in multitude? Messenger, I,
Hrothgar's herald! Heroes so many
ne'er met I as strangers of mood so strong.
'Tis plain that for prowess, not plunged into exile,
for high-hearted valor, Hrothgar ye seek!"
Him the sturdy-in-war bespake with words,
proud earl of the Weders answer made,
hardy 'neath helmet: -- "Hygelac's, we,
fellows at board; I am Beowulf named.
I am seeking to say to the son of Healfdene
this mission of mine, to thy master-lord,
the doughty prince, if he deign at all
grace that we greet him, the good one, now."
Wulfgar spake, the Wendles' chieftain,
whose might of mind to many was known,
his courage and counsel: "The king of Danes,
the Scyldings' friend, I fain will tell,
the Breaker-of-Rings, as the boon thou askest,
the famed prince, of thy faring hither,
and, swiftly after, such answer bring
as the doughty monarch may deign to give."
Hied then in haste to where Hrothgar sat
white-haired and old, his earls about him,
till the stout thane stood at the shoulder there
of the Danish king: good courtier he!
Wulfgar spake to his winsome lord: --
"Hither have fared to thee far-come men
o'er the paths of ocean, people of Geatland;
and the stateliest there by his sturdy band
is Beowulf named. This boon they seek,
that they, my master, may with thee
have speech at will: nor spurn their prayer
to give them hearing, gracious Hrothgar!
In weeds of the warrior worthy they,
methinks, of our liking; their leader most surely,
a hero that hither his henchmen has led."

HROTHGAR answered, helmet of Scyldings: --
 "I knew him of yore in his youthful days;
 his aged father was Ecgtheow named,
 to whom, at home, gave Hrethel the Geat
 his only daughter. Their offspring bold
 fares hither to seek the steadfast friend.
 And seamen, too, have said me this, --
 who carried my gifts to the Geatish court,
 thither for thanks, -- he has thirty men's
 heft of grasp in the gripe of his hand,
 the bold-in-battle. Blessed God
 out of his mercy this man hath sent
 to Danes of the West, as I ween indeed,
 against horror of Grendel. I hope to give
 the good youth gold for his gallant thought.
 Be thou in haste, and bid them hither,
 clan of kinsmen, to come before me;
 and add this word, -- they are welcome guests
 to folk of the Danes."

[To the door of the hall
 Wulfgar went] and the word declared: --
 "To you this message my master sends,
 East-Danes' king, that your kin he knows,
 hardy heroes, and hails you all
 welcome hither o'er waves of the sea!
 Ye may wend your way in war-attire,
 and under helmets Hrothgar greet;
 but let here the battle-shields bide your parley,
 and wooden war-shafts wait its end."
 Uprose the mighty one, ringed with his men,
 brave band of thanes: some bode without,
 battle-gear guarding, as bade the chief.
 Then hied that troop where the herald led them,
 under Heorot's roof: [the hero strode,]
 hardy 'neath helm, till the hearth he neared.
 Beowulf spake, -- his breastplate gleamed,
 war-net woven by wit of the smith: --
 "Thou Hrothgar, hail! Hygelac's I,
 kinsman and follower. Fame a plenty
 have I gained in youth! These Grendel-deeds
 I heard in my home-land heralded clear.
 Seafarers say how stands this hall,
 of buildings best, for your band of thanes
 empty and idle, when evening sun
 in the harbor of heaven is hidden away.
 So my vassals advised 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 well.
 Themselves had seen me from slaughter come
 blood-flecked from foes, where five I bound,
 and that wild brood worsted. I' the waves I slew
 nicors {6a} by night, in need and peril
 avenging the Weders, {6b} whose woe they sought, --

crushing the grim ones. Grendel now,
monster cruel, be mine to quell
in single battle! So, from thee,
thou sovran of the Shining-Danes,
Scyldings'-bulwark, a boon I seek, --
and, Friend-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 purge!
More I hear, that the monster dire,
in his wanton mood, of weapons recks not;
hence shall I scorn -- so Hygelac stay,
king of my kindred, kind to me! --
brand or buckler to bear in the fight,
gold-colored targe: but with gripe alone
must I front the fiend and fight for life,
foe against foe. Then faith be his
in the doom of the Lord whom death shall take.
Fain, I ween, if the fight he win,
in this hall of gold my Geatish band
will he fearless eat, -- as oft before, --
my noblest thanes. Nor need'st thou then
to hide my head; {6c} for his shall I be,
dyed in gore, if death must take me;
and my blood-covered body he'll bear as prey,
ruthless devour it, the roamer-lonely,
with my life-blood redden his lair in the fen:
no further for me need'st food prepare!
To Hygelac send, if Hild {6d} should take me,
best of war-weeds, warding my breast,
armor excellent, heirloom of Hrethel
and work of Wayland. {6e} Fares Wyrd {6f} as she must."

VII

HROTHGAR spake, the Scyldings'-helmet: --
"For fight defensive, Friend my Beowulf,
to succor and save, thou hast sought us here.
Thy father's combat {7a} a feud enkindled
when Heatholaf with hand he slew
among the Wylfings; his Weder kin
for horror of fighting feared to hold him.
Fleeing, he sought our South-Dane folk,
over surge of ocean the Honor-Scyldings,
when first I was ruling the folk of Danes,
wielded, youthful, this widespread realm,
this hoard-hold of heroes. Heorogar was dead,
my elder brother, had breathed his last,
Healfdene's bairn: he was better than I!
Straightway the feud with fee {7b} I settled,
to the Wylfings sent, o'er watery ridges,
treasures olden: oaths he {7c} swore me.
Sore is my soul to say to any
of the race of man what ruth for me
in Heorot Grendel with hate hath wrought,

what sudden harryings. Hall-folk fail me,
my warriors wane; for Wyrd hath swept them
into Grendel'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, armed men,
that they would bide in the beer-hall here,
Grendel's attack with terror of blades.
Then was this mead-house at morning tide
dyed with gore, when the daylight broke,
all the boards of the benches blood-besprinkled,
gory the hall: I had heroes the less,
doughty dear-ones that death had reft.
-- But sit to the banquet, unbind thy words,
hardy hero, as heart shall prompt thee."

Gathered together, the Geatish men
in the banquet-hall on bench assigned,
sturdy-spirited, sat them down,
hardy-hearted. A henchman attended,
carried the carven cup in hand,
served the clear mead. Oft minstrels sang
blithe in Heorot. Heroes revelled,
no dearth of warriors, Weder and Dane.

VIII

UNFERTH spake, the son of Ecglaf,
who sat at the feet of the Scyldings' lord,
unbound the battle-runes. {8a} -- Beowulf's quest,
sturdy seafarer's, sorely galled him;
ever he envied that other men
should more achieve in middle-earth
of fame under heaven than he himself. --
"Art thou that 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 deep
to risk your lives? No living man,
or lief or loath, from your labor dire
could you dissuade, from swimming the main.
Ocean-tides with your arms ye covered,
with strenuous hands the sea-streets measured,
swam o'er the waters. Winter's storm
rolled the rough waves. In realm of sea
a sennight strove ye. In swimming he topped thee,
had more of main! Him at morning-tide
billows bore to the Battling Reamas,
whence he hied to his home so dear
beloved of his liegemen, to land of Brondings,
fastness fair, where his folk he ruled,
town and treasure. In triumph o'er thee
Beanstan's bairn {8b} his boast achieved.
So ween I for thee a worse adventure
-- though in buffet of battle thou brave hast been,

in struggle grim, -- if Grendel's approach
thou darst await through the watch of night!"

Beowulf spake, bairn of Ecgtheow: --
"What a deal hast uttered, dear my Unferth,
drunken with beer, of Breca now,
told of his triumph! Truth I claim it,
that I had more of might in the sea
than any man else, more ocean-endurance.
We twain had talked, in time of youth,
and made our boast, -- we were merely boys,
striplings still, -- to stake our lives
far at sea: and so we performed it.
Naked swords, as we swam along,
we held in hand, with hope to guard us
against the whales. 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 tides abode
five nights full till the flood divided us,
churning waves and chillest weather,
darkling night, and the northern wind
ruthless rushed 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-linked, help afforded, --
battle-sark braided my breast to ward,
garnished with gold. There grasped me firm
and haled me to bottom the hated foe,
with grimdest gripe. 'Twas granted me, though,
to pierce the monster with point of sword,
with blade of battle: huge beast of the sea
was whelmed by the hurly through hand of mine.

IX

ME thus often the evil monsters
thronging threatened. With thrust of my sword,
the darling, I dealt them due return!
Nowise had they bliss from their booty then
to devour their victim, vengeful creatures,
seated to banquet at bottom of sea;
but at break of day, by my brand sore hurt,
on the edge of ocean up they lay,
put to sleep by the sword. And since, by them
on the fathomless sea-ways sailor-folk
are never molested. -- Light from east,
came bright God's beacon; the billows sank,
so that I saw the sea-cliffs high,
windy walls. For Wyrd oft saveth
earl undoomed if he doughty be!
And so it came that I killed with my sword
nine of the nicors. Of night-fought battles
ne'er heard I a harder 'neath heaven's dome,
nor adrift on the deep a more desolate man!

Yet I came unharmed from that hostile clutch,
though spent with swimming. The sea upbore me,
flood of the tide, on Finnish land,
the welling waters. No wise of thee
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 done at all
with bloody brand, -- I boast not of it! --
though thou wast the bane {9a} of thy brethren dear,
thy closest kin, whence curse of hell
awaits thee, well as thy wit may serve!
For I say in sooth, thou son of Ecglaf,
never had Grendel these grim deeds wrought,
monster dire, on thy master dear,
in Heorot such havoc, if heart of thine
were as battle-bold as thy boast is loud!
But he has found no feud will happen;
from sword-clash dread of your Danish clan
he vaunts him safe, from the Victor-Scyldings.
He forces pledges, favors none
of the land of Danes, but lustily murders,
fights and feasts, nor feud he dreads
from Spear-Dane men. But speedily now
shall I prove him the prowess and pride of the Geats,
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 sun from the south shall beam!"
Joyous then was the Jewel-giver,
hoar-haired, war-brave; help awaited
the Bright-Danes' prince, from Beowulf hearing,
folk's good shepherd, such firm resolve.
Then was laughter of liegemen loud resounding
with winsome words. Came Wealhtheow forth,
queen of Hrothgar, heedful of courtesy,
gold-decked, greeting the guests in hall;
and the high-born lady handed the cup
first 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-famed king.

Through the hall then went the Helmings' Lady,
to younger and older everywhere
carried the cup, till come the moment
when the ring-graced queen, the royal-hearted,
to Beowulf bore the beaker of mead.
She greeted the Geats' lord, God she thanked,
in wisdom's words, that her will was granted,
that at last on a hero her hope could lean
for comfort in terrors. The cup he took,
hardy-in-war, from Wealhtheow's hand,
and answer uttered the eager-for-combat.
Beowulf spake, bairn of Ecgtheow: --
"This was my thought, when my thanes and I
bent to the ocean and entered our boat,

that I would work the will of your people
fully, or fighting fall in death,
in fiend's gripe fast. 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,
Beowulf's battle-boast. -- Bright with gold
the stately dame by her spouse sat down.
Again, as erst, began in hall
warriors' wassail and 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
fight for the fiend in that festal hall,
when the sheen of the sun they saw no more,
and dusk of night sank darkling nigh,
and shadowy shapes came striding on,
wan under welkin. The warriors rose.
Man to man, he made harangue,
Hrothgar to Beowulf, bade him hail,
let him wield the wine hall: a word he added: --
"Never to any man erst I trusted,
since I could heave up hand and shield,
this noble Dane-Hall, till now to thee.
Have now and hold this house unpeered;
remember thy glory; thy might declare;
watch for the foe! No wish shall fail thee
if thou bidest the battle with bold-won life."

X

THEN Hrothgar went with his hero-train,
defence-of-Scyldings, forth from hall;
fain would the war-lord Wealtheow seek,
couch of his queen. The King-of-Glory
against this Grendel a guard had set,
so heroes heard, a hall-defender,
who warded the monarch and watched for the monster.
In truth, the Geats' prince gladly trusted
his mettle, his might, the mercy of God!
Cast off then his corselet of iron,
helmet from head; to his henchman gave, --
choicest of weapons, -- the well-chased sword,
bidding him guard the gear of battle.
Spake then his Vaunt the valiant man,
Beowulf Geat, ere the bed be sought: --
"Of force in fight no feebler I count me,
in grim war-deeds, than Grendel deems him.
Not with the sword, then, to sleep of death
his life will I give, though it lie in my power.
No skill is his to strike against me,
my shield to hew though he hardy be,
bold in battle; we both, this night,
shall spurn the sword, if he seek me here,
unweaponed, for war. Let wisest God,

sacred Lord, on which side soever
doom decree as he deemeth right."
Reclined then the chieftain, and cheek-pillows held
the head of the earl, while all about him
seamen hardy on hall-beds sank.
None of them thought that thence their steps
to the folk and fastness that fostered them,
to the land they loved, would lead them back!
Full well they wist that on warriors many
battle-death seized, in the banquet-hall,
of Danish clan. But comfort and help,
war-weal weaving, to Weder folk
the Master gave, that, by might of one,
over their enemy all prevailed,
by single strength. In sooth 'tis told
that highest God o'er human kind
hath wielded ever! -- Thro' wan night striding,
came the walker-in-shadow. Warriors slept
whose hest was to guard the gabled hall, --
all save one. 'Twas widely known
that against God's will the ghostly ravager
him {10a} could not hurl to haunts of darkness;
wakeful, ready, with warrior's wrath,
bold he bided the battle's issue.

XI

THEN from the moorland, by misty crags,
with God's wrath laden, Grendel came.
The monster was minded of mankind now
sundry to seize in the stately house.
Under welkin he walked, till the wine-palace there,
gold-hall of men, he gladly discerned,
flashing with fretwork. Not first time, this,
that he the home of Hrothgar sought, --
yet ne'er in his life-day, late or early,
such hardy heroes, such hall-thanes, found!
To the house the warrior walked apace,
parted from peace; {11a} the portal opended,
though with forged bolts fast, when his fists had
struck it,
and baleful he burst in his blatant rage,
the house's mouth. All hastily, then,
o'er fair-paved floor the fiend trod on,
ireful he strode; there streamed from his eyes
fearful flashes, like flame to see.

He spied in hall the hero-band,
kin and clansmen clustered asleep,
hardy liegemen. Then laughed his heart;
for the monster was minded, ere morn should dawn,
savage, to sever the soul of each,
life from body, since lusty banquet
waited his will! But Wyrd forbade him
to seize any more of men on earth

after that evening. Eagerly watched
Hygelac's kinsman his cursed foe,
how he would fare in fell attack.
Not that the monster was minded to pause!
Straightway he seized a sleeping warrior
for the first, and tore him fiercely asunder,
the bone-frame bit, drank blood in streams,
swallowed him piecemeal: swiftly thus
the lifeless corse was clear devoured,
e'en feet and hands. Then farther he hied;
for the hardy hero with hand he grasped,
felt for the foe with fiendish claw,
for the hero reclining, -- who clutched it boldly,
prompt to answer, propped on his arm.
Soon then saw that shepherd-of-evils
that never he met in this middle-world,
in the ways of earth, another wight
with heavier hand-gripe; at heart he feared,
sorrowed in soul, -- none the sooner escaped!
Fain would he flee, his fastness seek,
the den of devils: no doings now
such as oft he had done in days of old!
Then bethought him the hardy Hygelac-thane
of his boast at evening: up he bounded,
grasped firm his foe, whose fingers cracked.
The fiend made off, but the earl close followed.
The monster meant -- if he might at all --
to fling himself free, and far away
fly to the fens, -- knew his fingers' power
in the gripe of the grim one. Gruesome march
to Heorot this monster of harm had made!
Din filled the room; the Danes were bereft,
castle-dwellers and clansmen all,
earls, of their ale. Angry were both
those savage hall-guards: the house resounded.
Wonder it was the wine-hall firm
in the strain of their struggle stood, to earth
the fair house fell not; too fast it was
within and without by its iron bands
craftily clamped; though there crashed from sill
many a mead-bench -- men have told me --
gay with gold, where the grim foes wrestled.
So well had weened the wisest Scyldings
that not ever at all might any man
that bone-decked, brave house break asunder,
crush by craft, -- unless clasp of fire
in smoke engulfed it. -- Again uprose
din redoubled. Danes of the North
with fear and frenzy were filled, each one,
who from the wall that wailing heard,
God's foe sounding his grisly song,
cry of the conquered, clamorous pain
from captive of hell. Too closely held him
he who of men in might was strongest
in that same day of this our life.

XII

NOT in any wise would the earls'-defence {12a}
suffer that slaughterous stranger to live,
useless deeming his days and years
to men on earth. Now many an earl
of Beowulf brandished blade ancestral,
fain the life of their lord to shield,
their praised prince, if power were theirs;
never they knew, -- as they neared the foe,
hardy-hearted heroes of war,
aiming their swords on every side
the accursed to kill, -- no keenest blade,
no farest of falchions fashioned on earth,
could harm or hurt that hideous fiend!
He was safe, by his spells, from sword of battle,
from edge of iron. Yet his end and parting
on that same day of this our life
woful should be, and his wandering soul
far off flit to the fiends' domain.
Soon he found, who in former days,
harmful in heart and hated of God,
on many a man such murder wrought,
that the frame of his body failed him now.
For him the keen-souled kinsman of Hygelac
held in hand; hateful alive
was each to other. The outlaw dire
took mortal hurt; a mighty wound
showed on his shoulder, and sinews cracked,
and the bone-frame burst. To Beowulf now
the glory was given, and Grendel thence
death-sick his den in the dark moor sought,
noisome abode: he knew too well
that here was the last of life, an end
of his days on earth. -- To all the Danes
by that bloody battle the boon had come.
From ravage had rescued the roving stranger
Hrothgar's hall; the hardy and wise one
had purged it anew. His night-work pleased him,
his deed and its honor. To Eastern Danes
had the valiant Geat his vaunt made good,
all their sorrow and ills assuaged,
their bale of battle borne so long,
and all the dole they erst endured
pain a-plenty. -- 'Twas proof of this,
when the hardy-in-fight a hand laid down,
arm and shoulder, -- all, indeed,
of Grendel's gripe, -- 'neath the gabled roof.

XIII

MANY at morning, as men have told me,
warriors gathered the gift-hall round,
folk-leaders faring from far and near,

o'er wide-stretched ways, the wonder to view,
trace of the traitor. Not troublous seemed
the enemy's end to any man
who saw by the gait of the graceless foe
how the weary-hearted, away from thence,
baffled in battle and banned, his steps
death-marked dragged to the devils' mere.
Bloody the billows were boiling there,
turbid the tide of tumbling waves
horribly seething, with sword-blood hot,
by that doomed one dyed, who in den of the moor
laid forlorn his life adown,
his heathen soul, and hell received it.
Home then rode the hoary clansmen
from that merry journey, and many a youth,
on horses white, the hardy warriors,
back from the mere. Then Beowulf's glory
eager they echoed, and all averred
that from sea to sea, or south or north,
there was no other in earth's domain,
under vault of heaven, more valiant found,
of warriors none more worthy to rule!
(On their lord beloved they laid no slight,
gracious Hrothgar: a good king he!)
From time to time, the tried-in-battle
their gray steeds set to gallop amain,
and ran a race when the road seemed fair.
From time to time, a thane of the king,
who had made many vaunts, and was mindful of verses,
stored with sagas and songs of old,
bound word to word in well-knit rime,
welded his lay; this warrior soon
of Beowulf's quest right cleverly sang,
and artfully added an excellent tale,
in well-ranged words, of the warlike deeds
he had heard in saga of Sigemund.
Strange the story: he said it all, --
the Waelsing's wanderings wide, his struggles,
which never were told to tribes of men,
the feuds and the frauds, save to Fitela only,
when of these doings he deigned to speak,
uncle to nephew; as ever the twain
stood side by side in stress of war,
and multitude of the monster kind
they had felled with their swords. Of Sigemund grew,
when he passed from life, no little praise;
for the doughty-in-combat a dragon killed
that herded the hoard: {13a} under hoary rock
the atheling dared the deed alone
fearful quest, nor was Fitela there.
Yet so it befell, his falchion pierced
that wondrous worm, -- on the wall it struck,
best blade; the dragon died in its blood.
Thus had the dread-one by daring achieved
over the ring-hoard to rule at will,
himself to pleasure; a sea-boat he loaded,
and bore on its bosom the beaming gold,

son of Waels; the worm was consumed.
He had of all heroes the highest renown
among races of men, this refuge-of-warriors,
for deeds of daring that decked his name
since the hand and heart of Heremod
grew slack in battle. He, swiftly banished
to mingle with monsters at mercy of foes,
to death was betrayed; for torrents of sorrow
had lamed him too long; a load of care
to earls and athelings all he proved.
Oft indeed, in earlier days,
for the warrior's wayfaring wise men mourned,
who had hoped of him help from harm and bale,
and had thought their sovran's son would thrive,
follow his father, his folk protect,
the hoard and the stronghold, heroes' land,
home of Scyldings. -- But here, thanes said,
the kinsman of Hygelac kinder seemed
to all: the other {13b} was urged to crime!
And afresh to the race, {13c} the fallow roads
by swift steeds measured! The morning sun
was climbing higher. Clansmen hastened
to the high-built hall, those hardy-minded,
the wonder to witness. Warden of treasure,
crowned with glory, the king himself,
with stately band from the bride-bower strode;
and with him the queen and her crowd of maidens
measured the path to the mead-house fair.

XIV

HROTHGAR spake, -- to the hall he went,
stood by the steps, the steep roof saw,
garnished with gold, and Grendel's hand: --
"For the sight I see to the Sovran Ruler
be speedy thanks! A throng of sorrows
I have borne from Grendel; but God still works
wonder on wonder, the Warden-of-Glory.
It was but now that I never more
for woes that weighed on me waited help
long as I lived, when, laved in blood,
stood sword-gore-stained this stateliest house, --
widespread woe for wise men all,
who had no hope to hinder ever
foes infernal and fiendish sprites
from havoc in hall. This hero now,
by the Wielder's might, a work has done
that not all of us erst could ever do
by wile and wisdom. Lo, well can she say
whoso of women this warrior bore
among sons of men, if still she liveth,
that the God of the ages was good to her
in the birth of her bairn. Now, Beowulf, thee,
of heroes best, I shall heartily love
as mine own, my son; preserve thou ever

this kinship new: thou shalt never lack
wealth of the world that I wield as mine!
Full oft for less have I largess showered,
my precious hoard, on a punier man,
less stout in struggle. Thyself hast now
fulfilled such deeds, that thy fame shall endure
through all the ages. As ever he did,
well may the Wielder reward thee still!"
Beowulf spake, bairn of Ecgtheow: --
"This work of war most willingly
we have fought, this fight, and fearlessly dared
force of the foe. Fain, too, were I
hadst thou but seen himself, what time
the fiend in his trappings tottered to fall!
Swiftly, I thought, in strongest gripe
on his bed of death to bind him down,
that he in the hent of this hand of mine
should breathe his last: but he broke away.
Him I might not -- the Maker willed not --
hinder from flight, and firm enough hold
the life-destroyer: too sturdy was he,
the ruthless, in running! For rescue, however,
he left behind him his hand in pledge,
arm and shoulder; nor aught of help
could the cursed one thus procure at all.
None the longer liveth he, loathsome fiend,
sunk in his sins, but sorrow holds him
tightly grasped in gripe of anguish,
in baleful bonds, where bide he must,
evil outlaw, such awful doom
as the Mighty Maker shall mete him out."

More silent seemed the son of Ecglaf {14a}
in boastful speech of his battle-deeds,
since athelings all, through the earl's great prowess,
beheld that hand, on the high roof gazing,
foeman's fingers, -- the forepart of each
of the sturdy nails to steel was likest, --
heathen's "hand-spear," hostile warrior's
claw uncanny. 'Twas clear, they said,
that him no blade of the brave could touch,
how keen soever, or cut away
that battle-hand bloody from baneful foe.

XV

THERE was hurry and hest in Heorot now
for hands to bedeck it, and dense was the throng
of men and women the wine-hall to cleanse,
the guest-room to garnish. Gold-gay shone the hangings
that were wove on the wall, and wonders many
to delight each mortal that looks upon them.
Though braced within by iron bands,
that building bright was broken sorely; {15a}
rent were its hinges; the roof alone

held safe and sound, when, seared with crime,
the fiendish foe his flight essayed,
of life despairing. -- No light thing that,
the flight for safety, -- essay it who will!
Forced of fate, he shall find his way
to the refuge ready for race of man,
for soul-possessors, and sons of earth;
and there his body on bed of death
shall rest after revel.
Arrived was the hour
when to hall proceeded Healfdene's son:
the king himself would sit to banquet.
Ne'er heard I of host in haughtier throng
more graciously gathered round giver-of-rings!
Bowed then to bench those bearers-of-glory,
fain of the feasting. Featly received
many a mead-cup the mighty-in-spirit,
kinsmen who sat in the sumptuous hall,
Hrothgar and Hrothulf. Heorot now
was filled with friends; the folk of Scyldings
ne'er yet had tried the traitor's deed.
To Beowulf gave the bairn of Healfdene
a gold-wove banner, guerdon of triumph,
broidered battle-flag, breastplate and helmet;
and a splendid sword was seen of many
borne to the brave one. Beowulf took
cup in hall: {15b} for such costly gifts
he suffered no shame in that soldier throng.
For I heard of few heroes, in heartier mood,
with four such gifts, so fashioned with gold,
on the ale-bench honoring others thus!
O'er the roof of the helmet high, a ridge,
wound with wires, kept ward o'er the head,
lest the relict-of-files {15c} should fierce invade,
sharp in the strife, when that shielded hero
should go to grapple against his foes.
Then the earls'-defence {15d} on the floor {15e} bade lead
coursers eight, with carven head-gear,
adown the hall: one horse was decked
with a saddle all shining and set in jewels;
'twas the battle-seat of the best of kings,
when to play of swords the son of Healfdene
was fain to fare. Ne'er failed his valor
in the crush of combat when corpses fell.
To Beowulf over them both then gave
the refuge-of-Ingwines right and power,
o'er war-steeds and weapons: wished him joy of them.
Manfully thus the mighty prince,
hoard-guard for heroes, that hard fight repaid
with steeds and treasures contemned by none
who is willing to say the sooth aright.

with Beowulf over the briny ways,
an heirloom there at the ale-bench gave,
precious gift; and the price {16a} bade pay
in gold for him whom Grendel erst
murdered, -- and fain of them more had killed,
had not wisest God their Wyrd averted,
and the man's {16b} brave mood. The Maker then
ruled human kind, as here and now.
Therefore is insight always best,
and forethought of mind. How much awaits him
of lief and of loath, who long time here,
through days of warfare this world endures!

Then song and music mingled sounds
in the presence of Healfdene's head-of-armies {16c}
and harping was heard with the hero-lay
as Hrothgar's singer the hall-joy woke
along the mead-seats, making his song
of that sudden raid on the sons of Finn. {16d}
Healfdene's hero, Hnaef the Scylding,
was fated to fall in the Frisian slaughter. {16e}
Hildeburh needed not hold in value
her enemies' honor! {16f} Innocent both
were the loved ones she lost at the linden-play,
bairn and brother, they bowed to fate,
stricken by spears; 'twas a sorrowful woman!
None doubted why the daughter of Hoc
bewailed her doom when dawning came,
and under the sky she saw them lying,
kinsmen murdered, where most she had kenned
of the sweets of the world! By war were swept, too,
Finn's own liegemen, and few were left;
in the parleying-place {16g} he could ply no longer
weapon, nor war could he wage on Hengest,
and rescue his remnant by right of arms
from the prince's thane. A pact he offered:
another dwelling the Danes should have,
hall and high-seat, and half the power
should fall to them in Frisian land;
and at the fee-gifts, Folcwald's son
day by day the Danes should honor,
the folk of Hengest favor with rings,
even as truly, with treasure and jewels,
with fretted gold, as his Frisian kin
he meant to honor in ale-hall there.
Pact of peace they plighted further
on both sides firmly. Finn to Hengest
with oath, upon honor, openly promised
that woful remnant, with wise-men's aid,
nobly to govern, so none of the guests
by word or work should warp the treaty, {16h}
or with malice of mind bemoan themselves
as forced to follow their fee-giver's slayer,
lordless men, as their lot ordained.
Should Frisian, moreover, with foeman's taunt,
that murderous hatred to mind recall,
then edge of the sword must seal his doom.

Oaths were given, and ancient gold
heaped from hoard. -- The hardy Scylding,
battle-thane best, {16i} on his balefire lay.
All on the pyre were plain to see
the gory sark, the gilded swine-crest,
boar of hard iron, and athelings many
slain by the sword: at the slaughter they fell.
It was Hildeburh's hest, at Hnaef's own pyre
the bairn of her body on brands to lay,
his bones to burn, on the balefire placed,
at his uncle's side. In sorrowful dirges
bewept them the woman: great wailing ascended.
Then wound up to welkin the wildest of death-fires,
roared o'er the hillock: {16j} heads all were melted,
gashes burst, and blood gushed out
from bites {16k} of the body. Balefire devoured,
greediest spirit, those spared not by war
out of either folk: their flower was gone.

XVII

THEN hastened those heroes their home to see,
friendless, to find the Frisian land,
houses and high burg. Hengest still
through the death-dyed winter dwelt with Finn,
holding pact, yet of home he minded,
though powerless his ring-decked prow to drive
over the waters, now waves rolled fierce
lashed by the winds, or winter locked them
in icy fetters. Then fared another
year to men's dwellings, as yet they do,
the sunbright skies, that their season ever
duly await. Far off winter was driven;
fair lay earth's breast; and fain was the rover,
the guest, to depart, though more gladly he pondered
on wreaking his vengeance than roaming the deep,
and how to hasten the hot encounter
where sons of the Frisians were sure to be.
So he escaped not the common doom,
when Hun with "Lafing," the light-of-battle,
best of blades, his bosom pierced:
its edge was famed with the Frisian earls.
On fierce-heart Finn there fell likewise,
on himself at home, the horrid sword-death;
for Guthlaf and Oslaf of grim attack
had sorrowing told, from sea-ways landed,
mourning their woes. {17a} Finn's wavering spirit
bode not in breast. The burg was reddened
with blood of foemen, and Finn was slain,
king amid clansmen; the queen was taken.
To their ship the Scylding warriors bore
all the chattels the chieftain owned,
whatever they found in Finn's domain
of gems and jewels. The gentle wife

o'er paths of the deep to the Danes they bore,
led to her land.
The lay was finished,
the gleeman's song. Then glad rose the revel;
bench-joy brightened. Bearers draw
from their "wonder-vats" wine. Comes Wealhtheow forth,
under gold-crown goes where the good pair sit,
uncle and nephew, true each to the other one,
kindred in amity. Unferth the spokesman
at the Scylding lord's feet sat: men had faith in his spirit,
his keenness of courage, though kinsmen had found him
unsure at the sword-play. The Scylding queen spoke:
"Quaff of this cup, my king and lord,
breaker of rings, and blithe be thou,
gold-friend of men; to the Geats here speak
such words of mildness as man should use.
Be glad with thy Geats; of those gifts be mindful,
or near or far, which now thou hast.

Men say to me, as son thou wishest
yon hero to hold. Thy Heorot purged,
jewel-hall brightest, enjoy while thou canst,
with many a largess; and leave to thy kin
folk and realm when forth thou goest
to greet thy doom. For gracious I deem
my Hrothulf, {17b} willing to hold and rule
nobly our youths, if thou yield up first,
prince of Scyldings, thy part in the world.
I ween with good he will well requite
offspring of ours, when all he minds
that for him we did in his helpless days
of gift and grace to gain him honor!"
Then she turned to the seat where her sons were replaced,
Hrethric and Hrothmund, with heroes' bairns,
young men together: the Geat, too, sat there,
Beowulf brave, the brothers between.

XVIII

A CUP she gave him, with kindly greeting
and winsome words. Of wounden gold,
she offered, to honor him, arm-jewels twain,
corselet and rings, and of collars the noblest
that ever I knew the earth around.
Ne'er heard I so mighty, 'neath heaven's dome,
a hoard-gem of heroes, since Hama bore
to his bright-built burg the Brisings' necklace,
jewel and gem casket. -- Jealousy fled he,
Eormenric's hate: chose help eternal.
Hygelac Geat, grandson of Swerting,
on the last of his raids this ring bore with him,
under his banner the booty defending,
the war-spoil warding; but Wyrd o'erwhelmed him
what time, in his daring, dangers he sought,
feud with Frisians. Fairest of gems

he bore with him over the beaker-of-waves,
sovran strong: under shield he died.
Fell the corpse of the king into keeping of Franks,
gear of the breast, and that gorgeous ring;
weaker warriors won the spoil,
after gripe of battle, from Geatland's lord,
and held the death-field.
Din rose in hall.
Wealhtheow spake amid warriors, and said: --
"This jewel enjoy in thy jocund youth,
Beowulf lov'd, these battle-weeds wear,
a royal treasure, and richly thrive!
Preserve thy strength, and these striplings here
counsel in kindness: requital be mine.
Hast done such deeds, that for days to come
thou art famed among folk both far and near,
so wide as washeth the wave of Ocean
his windy walls. Through the ways of life
prosper, O prince! I pray for thee
rich possessions. To son of mine
be helpful in deed and uphold his joys!
Here every earl to the other is true,
mild of mood, to the master loyal!
Thanes are friendly, the throng obedient,
liegemen are revelling: list and obey!"
Went then to her place. -- That was proudest of feasts;
flowed wine for the warriors. Wyrd they knew not,
destiny dire, and the doom to be seen
by many an earl when eve should come,
and Hrothgar homeward hasten away,
royal, to rest. The room was guarded
by an army of earls, as erst was done.
They bared the bench-boards; abroad they spread
beds and bolsters. -- One beer-carouser
in danger of doom lay down in the hall. --

At their heads they set their shields of war,
bucklers bright; on the bench were there
over each atheling, easy to see,
the high battle-helmet, the haughty spear,
the corselet of rings. 'Twas their custom so
ever to be for battle prepared,
at home, or harrying, which it were,
even as oft as evil threatened
their sovran king. -- They were clansmen good.

XIX

THEN sank they to sleep. With sorrow one bought
his rest of the evening, -- as ofttyme had happened
when Grendel guarded that golden hall,
evil wrought, till his end drew nigh,
slaughter for sins. 'Twas seen and told
how an avenger survived the fiend,
as was learned afar. The livelong time

after that grim fight, Grendel's mother,
monster of women, mourned her woe.
She was doomed to dwell in the dreary waters,
cold sea-courses, since Cain cut down
with edge of the sword his only brother,
his father's offspring: outlawed he fled,
marked with murder, from men's delights
warded the wilds. -- There woke from him
such fate-sent ghosts as Grendel, who,
war-wolf horrid, at Heorot found
a warrior watching and waiting the fray,
with whom the grisly one grappled amain.
But the man remembered his mighty power,
the glorious gift that God had sent him,
in his Maker's mercy put his trust
for comfort and help: so he conquered the foe,
felled the fiend, who fled abject,
reft of joy, to the realms of death,
mankind's foe. And his mother now,
gloomy and grim, would go that quest
of sorrow, the death of her son to avenge.
To Heorot came she, where helmeted Danes
slept in the hall. Too soon came back
old ills of the earls, when in she burst,
the mother of Grendel. Less grim, though, that terror,
e'en as terror of woman in war is less,
might of maid, than of men in arms
when, hammer-forged, the falchion hard,
sword gore-stained, through swine of the helm,
crested, with keen blade carves amain.
Then was in hall the hard-edge drawn,
the swords on the settles, {19a} and shields a-many
firm held in hand: nor helmet minded
nor harness of mail, whom that horror seized.
Haste was hers; she would hie afar
and save her life when the liegemen saw her.
Yet a single atheling up she seized
fast and firm, as she fled to the moor.
He was for Hrothgar of heroes the dearest,
of trusty vassals betwixt the seas,
whom she killed on his couch, a clansman famous,
in battle brave. -- Nor was Beowulf there;
another house had been held apart,
after giving of gold, for the Geat renowned. --
Uproar filled Heorot; the hand all had viewed,
blood-flecked, she bore with her; bale was returned,
dole in the dwellings: 'twas dire exchange
where Dane and Geat were doomed to give
the lives of loved ones. Long-tried king,
the hoary hero, at heart was sad
when he knew his noble no more lived,
and dead indeed was his dearest thane.
To his bower was Beowulf brought in haste,
dauntless victor. As daylight broke,
along with his earls the atheling lord,
with his clansmen, came where the king abode
waiting to see if the Wielder-of-All

would turn this tale of trouble and woe.
Strode o'er floor the famed-in-strife,
with his hand-companions, -- the hall resounded, --
wishing to greet the wise old king,
Ingwines' lord; he asked if the night
had passed in peace to the prince's mind.

XX

HROTHGAR spake, helmet-of-Scyldings: --
"Ask not of pleasure! Pain is renewed
to Danish folk. Dead is Aeschere,
of Yrmenlaf the elder brother,
my sage adviser and stay in council,
shoulder-comrade in stress of fight
when warriors clashed and we warded our heads,
hewed the helm-boars; hero famed
should be every earl as Aeschere was!
But here in Heorot a hand hath slain him
of wandering death-sprite. I wot not whither, {20a}
proud of the prey, her path she took,
fain of her fill. The feud she avenged
that yesternight, unyieldingly,
Grendel in grimmest grasp thou killedst, --
seeing how long these liegemen mine
he ruined and ravaged. Reft of life,
in arms he fell. Now another comes,
keen and cruel, her kin to avenge,
faring far in feud of blood:
so that many a thane shall think, who e'er
sorrows in soul for that sharer of rings,
this is hardest of heart-bales. The hand lies low
that once was willing each wish to please.
Land-dwellers here {20b} and liegemen mine,
who house by those parts, I have heard relate
that such a pair they have sometimes seen,
march-stalkers mighty the moorland haunting,
wandering spirits: one of them seemed,
so far as my folk could fairly judge,
of womankind; and one, accursed,
in man's guise trod the misery-track
of exile, though huger than human bulk.
Grendel in days long gone they named him,
folk of the land; his father they knew not,
nor any brood that was born to him
of treacherous spirits. Untrod is their home;
by wolf-cliffs haunt they and windy headlands,
fenways fearful, where flows the stream
from mountains gliding to gloom of the rocks,
underground flood. Not far is it hence
in measure of miles that the mere expands,
and o'er it the frost-bound forest hanging,
sturdily rooted, shadows the wave.
By night is a wonder weird to see,
fire on the waters. So wise lived none

of the sons of men, to search those depths!
Nay, though the heath-rover, harried by dogs,
the horn-proud hart, this holt should seek,
long distance driven, his dear life first
on the brink he yields ere he brave the plunge
to hide his head: 'tis no happy place!
Thence the welter of waters washes up
wan to welkin when winds bestir
evil storms, and air grows dusk,
and the heavens weep. Now is help once more
with thee alone! The land thou knowst not,
place of fear, where thou findest out
that sin-flecked being. Seek if thou dare!
I will reward thee, for waging this fight,
with ancient treasure, as erst I did,
with winding gold, if thou winnest back."

XXI

BEOWULF spake, bairn of Ecgtheow:
"Sorrow not, sage! It beseems us better
friends to avenge than fruitlessly mourn them.
Each of us all must his end abide
in the ways of the world; so win who may
glory ere death! When his days are told,
that is the warrior's worthiest doom.
Rise, O realm-warder! Ride we anon,
and mark the trail of the mother of Grendel.
No harbor shall hide her -- heed my promise! --
enfolding of field or forested mountain
or floor of the flood, let her flee where she will!
But thou this day endure in patience,
as I ween thou wilt, thy woes each one."
Leaped up the graybeard: God he thanked,
mighty Lord, for the man's brave words.
For Hrothgar soon a horse was saddled
wave-maned steed. The sovran wise
stately rode on; his shield-armed men
followed in force. The footprints led
along the woodland, widely seen,
a path o'er the plain, where she passed, and trod
the murky moor; of men-at-arms
she bore the bravest and best one, dead,
him who with Hrothgar the homestead ruled.
On then went the atheling-born
o'er stone-cliffs steep and strait defiles,
narrow passes and unknown ways,
headlands sheer, and the haunts of the Nicors.
Foremost he {21a} fared, a few at his side
of the wiser men, the ways to scan,
till he found in a flash the forested hill
hanging over the hoary rock,
a woful wood: the waves below
were dyed in blood. The Danish men
had sorrow of soul, and for Scyldings all,

for many a hero, 'twas hard to bear,
ill for earls, when Aeschere's head
they found by the flood on the foreland there.
Waves were welling, the warriors saw,
hot with blood; but the horn sang oft
battle-song bold. The band sat down,
and watched on the water worm-like things,
sea-dragons strange that sounded the deep,
and nicors that lay on the ledge of the ness --
such as oft essay at hour of morn
on the road-of-sails their ruthless quest, --
and sea-snakes and monsters. These started away,
swollen and savage that song to hear,
that war-horn's blast. The warden of Geats,
with bolt from bow, then balked of life,
of wave-work, one monster, amid its heart
went the keen war-shaft; in water it seemed
less doughty in swimming whom death had seized.
Swift on the billows, with boar-spears well
hooked and barbed, it was hard beset,
done to death and dragged on the headland,
wave-roamer wondrous. Warriors viewed
the grisly guest.

Then girt him Beowulf
in martial mail, nor mourned for his life.
His breastplate broad and bright of hues,
woven by hand, should the waters try;
well could it ward the warrior's body
that battle should break on his breast in vain
nor harm his heart by the hand of a foe.
And the helmet white that his head protected
was destined to dare the deeps of the flood,
through wave-whirl win: 'twas wound with chains,
decked with gold, as in days of yore
the weapon-smith worked it wondrously,
with swine-forms set it, that swords nowise,
brandished in battle, could bite that helm.
Nor was that the meanest of mighty helps
which Hrothgar's orator offered at need:
"Hrunting" they named the hilted sword,
of old-time heirlooms easily first;
iron was its edge, all etched with poison,
with battle-blood hardened, nor blenched it at fight
in hero's hand who held it ever,
on paths of peril prepared to go
to folkstead {21b} of foes. Not first time this
it was destined to do a daring task.
For he bore not in mind, the bairn of Ecglaf
sturdy and strong, that speech he had made,
drunk with wine, now this weapon he lent
to a stouter swordsman. Himself, though, durst not
under welter of waters wager his life
as loyal liegeman. So lost he his glory,
honor of earls. With the other not so,
who girded him now for the grim encounter.

BEOWULF spake, bairn of Ecgtheow: --
 "Have mind, thou honored offspring of Healfdene
 gold-friend of men, now I go on this quest,
 sovran wise, what once was said:
 if in thy cause it came that I
 should lose my life, thou wouldest loyal bide
 to me, though fallen, in father's place!
 Be guardian, thou, to this group of my thanes,
 my warrior-friends, if War should seize me;
 and the goodly gifts thou gavest me,
 Hrothgar beloved, to Hygelac send!
 Geatland's king may ken by the gold,
 Hrethel's son see, when he stares at the treasure,
 that I got me a friend for goodness famed,
 and joyed while I could in my jewel-bestower.
 And let Unferth wield this wondrous sword,
 earl far-honored, this heirloom precious,
 hard of edge: with Hrunting I
 seek doom of glory, or Death shall take me."

After these words the Weder-Geat lord
 boldly hastened, biding never
 answer at all: the ocean floods
 closed o'er the hero. Long while of the day
 fled ere he felt the floor of the sea.

Soon found the fiend who the flood-domain
 sword-hungry held these hundred winters,
 greedy and grim, that some guest from above,
 some man, was raiding her monster-realm.
 She grasped out for him with grisly claws,
 and the warrior seized; yet scathed she not
 his body hale; the breastplate hindered,
 as she strove to shatter the sark of war,
 the linked harness, with loathsome hand.
 Then bore this brine-wolf, when bottom she touched,
 the lord of rings to the lair she haunted
 whiles vainly he strove, though his valor held,
 weapon to wield against wondrous monsters
 that sore beset him; sea-beasts many
 tried with fierce tusks to tear his mail,
 and swarmed on the stranger. But soon he marked
 he was now in some hall, he knew not which,
 where water never could work him harm,
 nor through the roof could reach him ever
 fangs of the flood. Firelight he saw,
 beams of a blaze that brightly shone.
 Then the warrior was ware of that wolf-of-the-deep,
 mere-wife monstrous. For mighty stroke
 he swung his blade, and the blow withheld not.
 Then sang on her head that seemly blade
 its war-song wild. But the warrior found
 the light-of-battle {22a} was loath to bite,
 to harm the heart: its hard edge failed

the noble at need, yet had known of old
strife hand to hand, and had helmets cloven,
doomed men's fighting-gear. First time, this,
for the gleaming blade that its glory fell.
Firm still stood, nor failed in valor,
heedful of high deeds, Hygelac's kinsman;
flung away fretted sword, featly jewelled,
the angry earl; on earth it lay
steel-edged and stiff. His strength he trusted,
hand-gripe of might. So man shall do
whenever in war he weens to earn him
lasting fame, nor fears for his life!
Seized then by shoulder, shrank not from combat,
the Geatish war-prince Grendel's mother.
Flung then the fierce one, filled with wrath,
his deadly foe, that she fell to ground.
Swift on her part she paid him back
with grisly grasp, and grappled with him.
Spent with struggle, stumbled the warrior,
fiercest of fighting-men, fell adown.
On the hall-guest she hurled herself, hent her short sword,
broad and brown-edged, {22b} the bairn to avenge,
the sole-born son. -- On his shoulder lay
braided breast-mail, barring death,
withstanding entrance of edge or blade.
Life would have ended for Ecgtheow's son,
under wide earth for that earl of Geats,
had his armor of war not aided him,
battle-net hard, and holy God
wielded the victory, wisest Maker.
The Lord of Heaven allowed his cause;
and easily rose the earl erect.

XXIII

'MID the battle-gear saw he a blade triumphant,
old-sword of Eotens, with edge of proof,
warriors' heirloom, weapon unmatched,
-- save only 'twas more than other men
to bandy-of-battle could bear at all --
as the giants had wrought it, ready and keen.
Seized then its chain-hilt the Scyldings' chieftain,
bold and battle-grim, brandished the sword,
reckless of life, and so wrathfully smote
that it gripped her neck and grasped her hard,
her bone-rings breaking: the blade pierced through
that fated-one's flesh: to floor she sank.
Bloody the blade: he was blithe of his deed.
Then blazed forth light. 'Twas bright within
as when from the sky there shines unclouded
heaven's candle. The hall he scanned.
By the wall then went he; his weapon raised
high by its hilts the Hygelac-thane,
angry and eager. That edge was not useless

to the warrior now. He wished with speed
Grendel to guerdon for grim raids many,
for the war he waged on Western-Danes
oftener far than an only time,
when of Hrothgar's hearth-companions
he slew in slumber, in sleep devoured,
fifteen men of the folk of Danes,
and as many others outward bore,
his horrible prey. Well paid for that
the wrathful prince! For now prone he saw
Grendel stretched there, spent with war,
spoiled of life, so scathed had left him
Heorot's battle. The body sprang far
when after death it endured the blow,
sword-stroke savage, that severed its head.
Soon, {23a} then, saw the sage companions
who waited with Hrothgar, watching the flood,
that the tossing waters turbid grew,
blood-stained the mere. Old men together,
hoary-haired, of the hero spake;
the warrior would not, they weened, again,
proud of conquest, come to seek
their mighty master. To many it seemed
the wolf-of-the-waves had won his life.
The ninth hour came. The noble Scyldings
left the headland; homeward went
the gold-friend of men. {23b} But the guests sat on,
stared at the surges, sick in heart,
and wished, yet weened not, their winsome lord
again to see.

Now that sword began,
from blood of the fight, in battle-droppings, {23c}
war-blade, to wane: 'twas a wondrous thing
that all of it melted as ice is wont
when frosty fetters the Father loosens,
unwinds the wave-bonds, wielding all
seasons and times: the true God he!
Nor took from that dwelling the duke of the Geats
save only the head and that hilt withal
blazoned with jewels: the blade had melted,
burned was the bright sword, her blood was so hot,
so poisoned the hell-sprite who perished within there.
Soon he was swimming who safe saw in combat
downfall of demons; up-dove through the flood.
The clashing waters were cleansed now,
waste of waves, where the wandering fiend
her life-days left and this lapsing world.
Swam then to strand the sailors'-refuge,
sturdy-in-spirit, of sea-booty glad,
of burden brave he bore with him.
Went then to greet him, and God they thanked,
the thane-band choice of their chieftain blithe,
that safe and sound they could see him again.
Soon from the hardy one helmet and armor
deftly they doffed: now drowsed the mere,
water 'neath welkin, with war-blood stained.

Forth they fared by the footpaths thence,
merry at heart the highways measured,
well-known roads. Courageous men
carried the head from the cliff by the sea,
an arduous task for all the band,
the firm in fight, since four were needed
on the shaft-of-slaughter {23d} strenuously
to bear to the gold-hall Grendel's head.
So presently to the palace there
foemen fearless, fourteen Geats,
marching came. Their master-of-clan
mighty amid them the meadow-ways trod.
Strode then within the sovran thane
fearless in fight, of fame renowned,
hardy hero, Hrothgar to greet.
And next by the hair into hall was borne
Grendel's head, where the henchmen were drinking,
an awe to clan and queen alike,
a monster of marvel: the men looked on.

XXIV

BEOWULF spake, bairn of Ecgtheow: --
"Lo, now, this sea-booty, son of Healfdene,
Lord of Scyldings, we've lustily brought thee,
sign of glory; thou seest it here.
Not lightly did I with my life escape!
In war under water this work I essayed
with endless effort; and even so
my strength had been lost had the Lord not shielded me.
Not a whit could I with Hrunting do
in work of war, though the weapon is good;
yet a sword the Sovran of Men vouchsafed me
to spy on the wall there, in splendor hanging,
old, gigantic, -- how oft He guides
the friendless wight! -- and I fought with that brand,
felling in fight, since fate was with me,
the house's wardens. That war-sword then
all burned, bright blade, when the blood gushed o'er it,
battle-sweat hot; but the hilt I brought back
from my foes. So avenged I their fiendish deeds
death-fall of Danes, as was due and right.
And this is my hest, that in Heorot now
safe thou canst sleep with thy soldier band,
and every thane of all thy folk
both old and young; no evil fear,
Scyldings' lord, from that side again,
aught ill for thy earls, as erst thou must!"
Then the golden hilt, for that gray-haired leader,
hoary hero, in hand was laid,
giant-wrought, old. So owned and enjoyed it
after downfall of devils, the Danish lord,
wonder-smiths' work, since the world was rid
of that grim-souled fiend, the foe of God,
murder-marked, and his mother as well.

Now it passed into power of the people's king,
best of all that the oceans bound
who have scattered their gold o'er Scandia's isle.
Hrothgar spake -- the hilt he viewed,
heirloom old, where was etched the rise
of that far-off fight when the floods o'erwhelmed,
raging waves, the race of giants
(fearful their fate!), a folk estranged
from God Eternal: whence guerdon due
in that waste of waters the Wielder paid them.
So on the guard of shining gold
in runic staves it was rightly said
for whom the serpent-traced sword was wrought,
best of blades, in bygone days,
and the hilt well wound. -- The wise-one spake,
son of Healfdene; silent were all: --
"Lo, so may he say who sooth and right
follows 'mid folk, of far times mindful,
a land-warden old, {24a} that this earl belongs
to the better breed! So, borne aloft,
thy fame must fly, O friend my Beowulf,
far and wide o'er folksteads many. Firmly thou
shalt all maintain,
mighty strength with mood of wisdom. Love of
mine will I assure thee,
as, awhile ago, I promised; thou shalt prove a stay
in future,
in far-off years, to folk of thine,
to the heroes a help. Was not Heremod thus
to offspring of Ecgwela, Honor-Scyldings,
nor grew for their grace, but for grisly slaughter,
for doom of death to the Danishmen.

He slew, wrath-swollen, his shoulder-comrades,
companions at board! So he passed alone,
chieftain haughty, from human cheer.
Though him the Maker with might endowed,
delights of power, and uplifted high
above all men, yet blood-fierce his mind,
his breast-hoard, grew, no bracelets gave he
to Danes as was due; he endured all joyless
strain of struggle and stress of woe,
long feud with his folk. Here find thy lesson!
Of virtue advise thee! This verse I have said for thee,
wise from lapsed winters. Wondrous seems
how to sons of men Almighty God
in the strength of His spirit sendeth wisdom,
estate, high station: He swayeth all things.
Whiles He letteth right lustily fare
the heart of the hero of high-born race, --
in seat ancestral assigns him bliss,
his folk's sure fortress in fee to hold,
puts in his power great parts of the earth,
empire so ample, that end of it
this wanter-of-wisdom weeneth none.
So he waxes in wealth, nowise can harm him
illness or age; no evil cares

shadow his spirit; no sword-hate threatens
from ever an enemy: all the world
wends at his will, no worse he knoweth,
till all within him obstinate pride
waxes and wakes while the warden slumbers,
the spirit's sentry; sleep is too fast
which masters his might, and the murderer nears,
stealthily shooting the shafts from his bow!

XXV

"UNDER harness his heart then is hit indeed
by sharpest shafts; and no shelter avails
from foul behest of the hellish fiend. {25a}
Him seems too little what long he possessed.
Greedy and grim, no golden rings
he gives for his pride; the promised future
forgets he and spurns, with all God has sent him,
Wonder-Wielder, of wealth and fame.
Yet in the end it ever comes
that the frame of the body fragile yields,
fated falls; and there follows another
who joyously the jewels divides,
the royal riches, nor recks of his forebear.
Ban, then, such baleful thoughts, Beowulf dearest,
best of men, and the better part choose,
profit eternal; and temper thy pride,
warrior famous! The flower of thy might
lasts now a while: but ere long it shall be
that sickness or sword thy strength shall minish,
or fang of fire, or flooding billow,
or bite of blade, or brandished spear,
or odious age; or the eyes' clear beam
wax dull and darken: Death even thee
in haste shall o'erwhelm, thou hero of war!
So the Ring-Danes these half-years a hundred I ruled,
wielded 'neath welkin, and warded them bravely
from mighty-ones many o'er middle-earth,
from spear and sword, till it seemed for me
no foe could be found under fold of the sky.
Lo, sudden the shift! To me seated secure
came grief for joy when Grendel began
to harry my home, the hellish foe;
for those ruthless raids, unresting I suffered
heart-sorrow heavy. Heaven be thanked,
Lord Eternal, for life extended
that I on this head all hewn and bloody,
after long evil, with eyes may gaze!
-- Go to the bench now! Be glad at banquet,
warrior worthy! A wealth of treasure
at dawn of day, be dealt between us!"
Glad was the Geats' lord, going betimes
to seek his seat, as the Sage commanded.
Afresh, as before, for the famed-in-battle,
for the band of the hall, was a banquet dight

nobly anew. The Night-Helm darkened
dusk o'er the drinkers.
The doughty ones rose:
for the hoary-headed would hasten to rest,
aged Scylding; and eager the Geat,
shield-fighter sturdy, for sleeping yearned.
Him wander-weary, warrior-guest
from far, a hall-thane heralded forth,
who by custom courtly cared for all
needs of a thane as in those old days
warrior-wanderers wont to have.
So slumbered the stout-heart. Stately the hall
rose gabled and gilt where the guest slept on
till a raven black the rapture-of-heaven {25b}
blithe-heart boded. Bright came flying
shine after shadow. The swordsmen hastened,
athelings all were eager homeward
forth to fare; and far from thence
the great-hearted guest would guide his keel.
Bade then the hardy-one Hrunting be brought
to the son of Ecglaf, the sword bade him take,
excellent iron, and uttered his thanks for it,
quoth that he counted it keen in battle,
"war-friend" winsome: with words he slandered not
edge of the blade: 'twas a big-hearted man!
Now eager for parting and armed at point
warriors waited, while went to his host
that Darling of Danes. The doughty atheling
to high-seat hastened and Hrothgar greeted.

XXVI

BEOWULF spake, bairn of Ecgtheow: --
"Lo, we seafarers say our will,
far-come men, that we fain would seek
Hygelac now. We here have found
hosts to our heart: thou hast harbored us well.
If ever on earth I am able to win me
more of thy love, O lord of men,
aught anew, than I now have done,
for work of war I am willing still!
If it come to me ever across the seas
that neighbor foemen annoy and fright thee, --
as they that hate thee erewhile have used, --
thousands then of thanes I shall bring,
heroes to help thee. Of Hygelac I know,
ward of his folk, that, though few his years,
the lord of the Geats will give me aid
by word and by work, that well I may serve thee,
wielding the war-wood to win thy triumph
and lending thee might when thou lackest men.
If thy Hrethric should come to court of Geats,
a sovran's son, he will surely there
find his friends. A far-off land
each man should visit who vaunts him brave."

Him then answering, Hrothgar spake: --
"These words of thine the wisest God
sent to thy soul! No sager counsel
from so young in years e'er yet have I heard.
Thou art strong of main and in mind art wary,
art wise in words! I ween indeed
if ever it hap that Hrethel's heir
by spear be seized, by sword-grim battle,
by illness or iron, thine elder and lord,
people's leader, -- and life be thine, --
no seemlier man will the Sea-Geats find
at all to choose for their chief and king,
for hoard-guard of heroes, if hold thou wilt
thy kinsman's kingdom! Thy keen mind pleases me
the longer the better, Beowulf loved!"

Thou hast brought it about that both our peoples,
sons of the Geat and Spear-Dane folk,
shall have mutual peace, and from murderous strife,
such as once they waged, from war refrain.
Long as I rule this realm so wide,
let our hoards be common, let heroes with gold
each other greet o'er the gannet's-bath,
and the ringed-prow bear o'er rolling waves
tokens of love. I trow my landfolk
towards friend and foe are firmly joined,
and honor they keep in the olden way."
To him in the hall, then, Healfdene's son
gave treasures twelve, and the trust-of-earls
bade him fare with the gifts to his folk beloved,
hale to his home, and in haste return.
Then kissed the king of kin renowned,
Scyldings' chieftain, that choicest thane,
and fell on his neck. Fast flowed the tears
of the hoary-headed. Heavy with winters,
he had chances twain, but he clung to this, {26a} --
that each should look on the other again,
and hear him in hall. Was this hero so dear to him.
his breast's wild billows he banned in vain;
safe in his soul a secret longing,
locked in his mind, for that loved man
burned in his blood. Then Beowulf strode,
glad of his gold-gifts, the grass-plot o'er,
warrior blithe. The wave-roamer bode
riding at anchor, its owner awaiting.
As they hastened onward, Hrothgar's gift
they lauded at length. -- 'Twas a lord unpeered,
every way blameless, till age had broken
-- it spareth no mortal -- his splendid might.

XXVII

CAME now to ocean the ever-courageous
hardy henchmen, their harness bearing,
woven war-sarks. The warden marked,

trusty as ever, the earl's return.
From the height of the hill no hostile words
reached the guests as he rode to greet them;
but "Welcome!" he called to that Weder clan
as the sheen-mailed spoilers to ship marched on.
Then on the strand, with steeds and treasure
and armor their roomy and ring-dight ship
was heavily laden: high its mast
rose over Hrothgar's hoarded gems.
A sword to the boat-guard Beowulf gave,
mounted with gold; on the mead-bench since
he was better esteemed, that blade possessing,
heirloom old. -- Their ocean-keel boarding,
they drove through the deep, and Daneland left.
A sea-cloth was set, a sail with ropes,
firm to the mast; the flood-timbers moaned; {27a}
nor did wind over billows that wave-swimmer blow
across from her course. The craft sped on,
foam-necked it floated forth o'er the waves,
keel firm-bound over briny currents,
till they got them sight of the Geatish cliffs,
home-known headlands. High the boat,
stirred by winds, on the strand updrove.
Helpful at haven the harbor-guard stood,
who long already for loved companions
by the water had waited and watched afar.
He bound to the beach the broad-bosomed ship
with anchor-bands, lest ocean-billows
that trusty timber should tear away.
Then Beowulf bade them bear the treasure,
gold and jewels; no journey far
was it thence to go to the giver of rings,
Hygelac Hrethling: at home he dwelt
by the sea-wall close, himself and clan.
Haughty that house, a hero the king,
high the hall, and Hygd {27b} right young,
wise and wary, though winters few
in those fortress walls she had found a home,
Haereth's daughter. Nor humble her ways,
nor grudged she gifts to the Geatish men,
of precious treasure. Not Thryth's pride showed she,
folk-queen famed, or that fell deceit.
Was none so daring that durst make bold
(save her lord alone) of the liegemen dear
that lady full in the face to look,
but forged fetters he found his lot,
bonds of death! And brief the respite;
soon as they seized him, his sword-doom was spoken,
and the burnished blade a baleful murder
proclaimed and closed. No queenly way
for woman to practise, though peerless she,
that the weaver-of-peace {27c} from warrior dear
by wrath and lying his life should reave!
But Hemming's kinsman hindered this. --
For over their ale men also told
that of these folk-horrors fewer she wrought,
onslaughts of evil, after she went,

gold-decked bride, to the brave young prince,
atheling haughty, and Offa's hall
o'er the fallow flood at her father's bidding
safely sought, where since she prospered,
royal, throned, rich in goods,
fain of the fair life fate had sent her,
and leal in love to the lord of warriors.
He, of all heroes I heard of ever
from sea to sea, of the sons of earth,
most excellent seemed. Hence Offa was praised
for his fighting and feeing by far-off men,
the spear-bold warrior; wisely he ruled
over his empire. Eomer woke to him,
help of heroes, Hemming's kinsman,
Grandson of Garmund, grim in war.

XXVIII

HASTENED the hardy one, henchmen with him,
sandy strand of the sea to tread
and widespread ways. The world's great candle,
sun shone from south. They strode along
with sturdy steps to the spot they knew
where the battle-king young, his burg within,
slayer of Ongentheow, shared the rings,
shelter-of-heroes. To Hygelac
Beowulf's coming was quickly told, --
that there in the court the clansmen's refuge,
the shield-companion sound and alive,
hale from the hero-play homeward strode.
With haste in the hall, by highest order,
room for the rovers was readily made.
By his sovran he sat, come safe from battle,
kinsman by kinsman. His kindly lord
he first had greeted in gracious form,
with manly words. The mead dispensing,
came through the high hall Haereth's daughter,
winsome to warriors, wine-cup bore
to the hands of the heroes. Hygelac then
his comrade fairly with question plied
in the lofty hall, sore longing to know
what manner of sojourn the Sea-Geats made.
"What came of thy quest, my kinsman Beowulf,
when thy yearnings suddenly swept thee yonder
battle to seek o'er the briny sea,
combat in Heorot? Hrothgar couldst thou
aid at all, the honored chief,
in his wide-known woes? With waves of care
my sad heart seethed; I sore mistrusted
my loved one's venture: long I begged thee
by no means to seek that slaughtering monster,
but suffer the South-Danes to settle their feud
themselves with Grendel. Now God be thanked
that safe and sound I can see thee now!"
Beowulf spake, the bairn of Ecgtheow: --

"Tis known and unhidden, Hygelac Lord,
to many men, that meeting of ours,
struggle grim between Grendel and me,
which we fought on the field where full too many
sorrows he wrought for the Scylding-Victors,
evils unending. These all I avenged.
No boast can be from breed of Grendel,
any on earth, for that uproar at dawn,
from the longest-lived of the loathsome race
in fleshly fold! -- But first I went
Hrothgar to greet in the hall of gifts,
where Healfdene's kinsman high-renowned,
soon as my purpose was plain to him,
assigned me a seat by his son and heir.
The liegemen were lusty; my life-days never
such merry men over mead in hall
have I heard under heaven! The high-born queen,
people's peace-bringer, passed through the hall,
cheered the young clansmen, clasps of gold,
ere she sought her seat, to sundry gave.
Oft to the heroes Hrothgar's daughter,
to earls in turn, the ale-cup tendered, --
she whom I heard these hall-companions
Freawaru name, when fretted gold
she proffered the warriors. Promised is she,
gold-decked maid, to the glad son of Froda.
Sage this seems to the Scylding's-friend,
kingdom's-keeper: he counts it wise
the woman to wed so and ward off feud,
store of slaughter. But seldom ever
when men are slain, does the murder-spear sink
but briefest while, though the bride be fair! {28a}
"Nor haply will like it the Heathobard lord,
and as little each of his liegemen all,
when a thane of the Danes, in that doughty throng,
goes with the lady along their hall,
and on him the old-time heirlooms glisten
hard and ring-decked, Heathobard's treasure,
weapons that once they wielded fair
until they lost at the linden-play {28b}
liegeman leal and their lives as well.
Then, over the ale, on this heirloom gazing,
some ash-wielder old who has all in mind
that spear-death of men, {28c} -- he is stern of mood,
heavy at heart, -- in the hero young
tests the temper and tries the soul
and war-hate wakens, with words like these: --
Canst thou not, comrade, ken that sword
which to the fray thy father carried
in his final feud, 'neath the fighting-mask,
dearest of blades, when the Danish slew him
and wielded the war-place on Withergild's fall,
after havoc of heroes, those hardy Scyldings?
Now, the son of a certain slaughtering Dane,
proud of his treasure, paces this hall,
joys in the killing, and carries the jewel {28d}
that rightfully ought to be owned by thee!_

Thus he urges and eggs him all the time
with keenest words, till occasion offers
that Freawaru's thane, for his father's deed,
after bite of brand in his blood must slumber,
losing his life; but that liegeman flies
living away, for the land he kens.

And thus be broken on both their sides
oaths of the earls, when Ingeld's breast
wells with war-hate, and wife-love now
after the care-billows cooler grows.

"So {28e} I hold not high the Heathobards' faith
due to the Danes, or their during love
and pact of peace. -- But I pass from that,
turning to Grendel, O giver-of-treasure,
and saying in full how the fight resulted,
hand-fray of heroes. When heaven's jewel
had fled o'er far fields, that fierce sprite came,
night-foe savage, to seek us out
where safe and sound we sentried the hall.
To Hondscio then was that harassing deadly,
his fall there was fated. He first was slain,
girded warrior. Grendel on him
turned murderous mouth, on our mighty kinsman,
and all of the brave man's body devoured.
Yet none the earlier, empty-handed,
would the bloody-toothed murderer, mindful of bale,
outward go from the gold-decked hall:
but me he attacked in his terror of might,
with greedy hand grasped me. A glove hung by him {28f}
wide and wondrous, wound with bands;
and in artful wise it all was wrought,
by devilish craft, of dragon-skins.

Me therein, an innocent man,
the fiendish foe was fain to thrust
with many another. He might not so,
when I all angrily upright stood.

'Twere long to relate how that land-destroyer
I paid in kind for his cruel deeds;
yet there, my prince, this people of thine
got fame by my fighting. He fled away,
and a little space his life preserved;
but there staid behind him his stronger hand
left in Heorot; heartsick thence
on the floor of the ocean that outcast fell.

Me for this struggle the Scyldings'-friend
paid in plenty with plates of gold,
with many a treasure, when morn had come
and we all at the banquet-board sat down.

Then was song and glee. The gray-haired Scylding,
much tested, told of the times of yore.

Whiles the hero his harp bestirred,
wood-of-delight; now lays he chanted
of sooth and sadness, or said aright
legends of wonder, the wide-hearted king;
or for years of his youth he would yearn at times,
for strength of old struggles, now stricken with age,
hoary hero: his heart surged full

when, wise with winters, he wailed their flight.
Thus in the hall the whole of that day
at ease we feasted, till fell o'er earth
another night. Anon full ready
in greed of vengeance, Grendel's mother
set forth all doleful. Dead was her son
through war-hate of Weders; now, woman monstrous
with fury fell a foeman she slew,
avenged her offspring. From Aeschere old,
loyal councillor, life was gone;
nor might they e'en, when morning broke,
those Danish people, their death-done comrade
burn with brands, on balefire lay
the man they mourned. Under mountain stream
she had carried the corpse with cruel hands.
For Hrothgar that was the heaviest sorrow
of all that had laden the lord of his folk.
The leader then, by thy life, besought me
(sad was his soul) in the sea-waves' coil
to play the hero and hazard my being
for glory of prowess: my guerdon he pledged.
I then in the waters -- 'tis widely known --
that sea-floor-guardian savage found.
Hand-to-hand there a while we struggled;
billows welled blood; in the briny hall
her head I hewed with a hardy blade
from Grendel's mother, -- and gained my life,
though not without danger. My doom was not yet.
Then the haven-of-heroes, Healfdene's son,
gave me in guerdon great gifts of price.

XXIX

"So held this king to the customs old,
that I wanted for nought in the wage I gained,
the meed of my might; he made me gifts,
Healfdene's heir, for my own disposal.
Now to thee, my prince, I proffer them all,
gladly give them. Thy grace alone
can find me favor. Few indeed
have I of kinsmen, save, Hygelac, thee!"
Then he bade them bear him the boar-head standard,
the battle-helm high, and breastplate gray,
the splendid sword; then spake in form: --
"Me this war-gear the wise old prince,
Hrothgar, gave, and his hest he added,
that its story be straightway said to thee. --
A while it was held by Heorogar king,
for long time lord of the land of Scyldings;
yet not to his son the sovran left it,
to daring Heoroweard, -- dear as he was to him,
his harness of battle. -- Well hold thou it all!"
And I heard that soon passed o'er the path of this treasure,
all apple-fallow, four good steeds,
each like the others, arms and horses

he gave to the king. So should kinsmen be,
not weave one another the net of wiles,
or with deep-hid treachery death contrive
for neighbor and comrade. His nephew was ever
by hardy Hygelac held full dear,
and each kept watch o'er the other's weal.
I heard, too, the necklace to Hygd he presented,
wonder-wrought treasure, which Wealhtheow gave him
sovran's daughter: three steeds he added,
slender and saddle-gay. Since such gift
the gem gleamed bright on the breast of the queen.
Thus showed his strain the son of Ecgtheow
as a man remarked for mighty deeds
and acts of honor. At ale he slew not
comrade or kin; nor cruel his mood,
though of sons of earth his strength was greatest,
a glorious gift that God had sent
the splendid leader. Long was he spurned,
and worthless by Geatish warriors held;
him at mead the master-of-clans
failed full oft to favor at all.
Slack and shiftless the strong men deemed him,
profitless prince; but payment came,
to the warrior honored, for all his woes. --
Then the bulwark-of-earls {29a} bade bring within,
hardy chieftain, Hrethel's heirloom
garnished with gold: no Geat e'er knew
in shape of a sword a statelier prize.
The brand he laid in Beowulf's lap;
and of hides assigned him seven thousand, {29b}
with house and high-seat. They held in common
land alike by their line of birth,
inheritance, home: but higher the king
because of his rule o'er the realm itself.

Now further it fell with the flight of years,
with harryings horrid, that Hygelac perished, {29c}
and Heardred, too, by hewing of swords
under the shield-wall slaughtered lay,
when him at the van of his victor-folk
sought hardy heroes, Heatho-Scilfings,
in arms o'erwhelming Hereric's nephew.
Then Beowulf came as king this broad
realm to wield; and he ruled it well
fifty winters, {29d} a wise old prince,
warding his land, until One began
in the dark of night, a Dragon, to rage.
In the grave on the hill a hoard it guarded,
in the stone-barrow steep. A strait path reached it,
unknown to mortals. Some man, however,
came by chance that cave within
to the heathen hoard. {29e} In hand he took
a golden goblet, nor gave he it back,
stole with it away, while the watcher slept,
by thievish wiles: for the warden's wrath
prince and people must pay betimes!

XXX

THAT way he went with no will of his own,
in danger of life, to the dragon's hoard,
but for pressure of peril, some prince's thane.
He fled in fear the fatal scourge,
seeking shelter, a sinful man,
and entered in. At the awful sight
tottered that guest, and terror seized him;
yet the wretched fugitive rallied anon
from fright and fear ere he fled away,
and took the cup from that treasure-hoard.
Of such besides there was store enough,
heirlooms old, the earth below,
which some earl forgotten, in ancient years,
left the last of his lofty race,
heedfully there had hidden away,
dearest treasure. For death of yore
had hurried all hence; and he alone
left to live, the last of the clan,
weeping his friends, yet wished to bide
warding the treasure, his one delight,
though brief his respite. The barrow, new-ready,
to strand and sea-waves stood anear,
hard by the headland, hidden and closed;
there laid within it his lordly heirlooms
and heaped hoard of heavy gold
that warden of rings. Few words he spake:
"Now hold thou, earth, since heroes may not,
what earls have owned! Lo, erst from thee
brave men brought it! But battle-death seized
and cruel killing my clansmen all,
robbed them of life and a liegeman's joys.
None have I left to lift the sword,
or to cleanse the carven cup of price,
beaker bright. My brave are gone.
And the helmet hard, all haughty with gold,
shall part from its plating. Polishers sleep
who could brighten and burnish the battle-mask;
and those weeds of war that were wont to brave
over bicker of shields the bite of steel
rust with their bearer. The ringed mail
fares not far with famous chieftain,
at side of hero! No harp's delight,
no glee-wood's gladness! No good hawk now
flies through the hall! Nor horses fleet
stamp in the burgstead! Battle and death
the flower of my race have reft away."
Mournful of mood, thus he moaned his woe,
alone, for them all, and unblithe wept
by day and by night, till death's fell wave
o'erwhelmed his heart. His hoard-of-bliss
that old ill-doer open found,
who, blazing at twilight the barrows haunteth,
naked foe-dragon flying by night

folded in fire: the folk of earth
dread him sore. 'Tis his doom to seek
hoard in the graves, and heathen gold
to watch, many-wintered: nor wins he thereby!
Powerful this plague-of-the-people thus
held the house of the hoard in earth
three hundred winters; till One aroused
wrath in his breast, to the ruler bearing
that costly cup, and the king implored
for bond of peace. So the barrow was plundered,
borne off was booty. His boon was granted
that wretched man; and his ruler saw
first time what was fashioned in far-off days.
When the dragon awoke, new woe was kindled.
O'er the stone he snuffed. The stark-heart found
footprint of foe who so far had gone
in his hidden craft by the creature's head. --
So may the undoomed easily flee
evils and exile, if only he gain
the grace of The Wielder! -- That warden of gold
o'er the ground went seeking, greedy to find
the man who wrought him such wrong in sleep.
Savage and burning, the barrow he circled
all without; nor was any there,
none in the waste.... Yet war he desired,
was eager for battle. The barrow he entered,
sought the cup, and discovered soon
that some one of mortals had searched his treasure,
his lordly gold. The guardian waited
ill-enduring till evening came;
boiling with wrath was the barrow's keeper,
and fain with flame the foe to pay
for the dear cup's loss. -- Now day was fled
as the worm had wished. By its wall no more
was it glad to bide, but burning flew
folded in flame: a fearful beginning
for sons of the soil; and soon it came,
in the doom of their lord, to a dreadful end.

XXXI

THEN the baleful fiend its fire belched out,
and bright homes burned. The blaze stood high
all landsfolk frightening. No living thing
would that loathly one leave as aloft it flew.
Wide was the dragon's warring seen,
its fiendish fury far and near,
as the grim destroyer those Geatish people
hated and hounded. To hidden lair,
to its hoard it hastened at hint of dawn.
Folk of the land it had lapped in flame,
with bale and brand. In its barrow it trusted,
its battling and bulwarks: that boast was vain!

To Beowulf then the bale was told

quickly and truly: the king's own home,
of buildings the best, in brand-waves melted,
that gift-throne of Geats. To the good old man
sad in heart, 'twas heaviest sorrow.
The sage assumed that his sovran God
he had angered, breaking ancient law,
and embittered the Lord. His breast within
with black thoughts welled, as his wont was never.
The folk's own fastness that fiery dragon
with flame had destroyed, and the stronghold all
washed by waves; but the warlike king,
prince of the Weders, plotted vengeance.
Warriors'-bulwark, he bade them work
all of iron -- the earl's commander --
a war-shield wondrous: well he knew
that forest-wood against fire were worthless,
linden could aid not. -- Atheling brave,
he was fated to finish this fleeting life, {31a}
his days on earth, and the dragon with him,
though long it had watched o'er the wealth of the hoard! --
Shame he reckoned it, sharer-of-rings,
to follow the flyer afar with a host,
a broad-flung band; nor the battle feared he,
nor deemed he dreadful the dragon's warring,
its vigor and valor: ventures desperate
he had passed a-plenty, and perils of war,
contest-crash, since, conqueror proud,
Hrothgar's hall he had wholly purged,
and in grapple had killed the kin of Grendel,
loathsome breed! Not least was that
of hand-to-hand fights where Hygelac fell,
when the ruler of Geats in rush of battle,
lord of his folk, in the Frisian land,
son of Hrethel, by sword-draughts died,
by brands down-beaten. Thence Beowulf fled
through strength of himself and his swimming power,
though alone, and his arms were laden with thirty
coats of mail, when he came to the sea!
Nor yet might Hetwaras {31b} haughtily boast
their craft of contest, who carried against him
shields to the fight: but few escaped
from strife with the hero to seek their homes!
Then swam over ocean Ecgtheow's son
lonely and sorrowful, seeking his land,
where Hygd made him offer of hoard and realm,
rings and royal-seat, reckoning naught
the strength of her son to save their kingdom
from hostile hordes, after Hygelac's death.
No sooner for this could the stricken ones
in any wise move that atheling's mind
over young Heardred's head as lord
and ruler of all the realm to be:
yet the hero upheld him with helpful words,
aided in honor, till, older grown,
he wielded the Weder-Geats. -- Wandering exiles
sought him o'er seas, the sons of Ohtere,
who had spurned the sway of the Scylfings'-helmet,

the bravest and best that broke the rings,
in Swedish land, of the sea-kings' line,
haughty hero. {31c} Hence Heardred's end.
For shelter he gave them, sword-death came,
the blade's fell blow, to bairn of Hygelac;
but the son of Ongentheow sought again
house and home when Heardred fell,
leaving Beowulf lord of Geats
and gift-seat's master. -- A good king he!

XXXII

THE fall of his lord he was fain to requite
in after days; and to Eadgils he proved
friend to the friendless, and forces sent
over the sea to the son of Ohtere,
weapons and warriors: well repaid he
those care-paths cold when the king he slew. {32a}
Thus safe through struggles the son of Ecgtheow
had passed a plenty, through perils dire,
with daring deeds, till this day was come
that doomed him now with the dragon to strive.
With comrades eleven the lord of Geats
swollen in rage went seeking the dragon.
He had heard whence all the harm arose
and the killing of clansmen; that cup of price
on the lap of the lord had been laid by the finder.
In the throng was this one thirteenth man,
starter of all the strife and ill,
care-laden captive; cringing thence
forced and reluctant, he led them on
till he came in ken of that cavern-hall,
the barrow delved near billowy surges,
flood of ocean. Within 'twas full
of wire-gold and jewels; a jealous warden,
warrior trusty, the treasures held,
lurked in his lair. Not light the task
of entrance for any of earth-born men!
Sat on the headland the hero king,
spake words of hail to his hearth-companions,
gold-friend of Geats. All gloomy his soul,
wavering, death-bound. Wyrd full nigh
stood ready to greet the gray-haired man,
to seize his soul-hoard, sunder apart
life and body. Not long would be
the warrior's spirit enwound with flesh.
Beowulf spake, the bairn of Ecgtheow: --
"Through store of struggles I strove in youth,
mighty feuds; I mind them all.
I was seven years old when the sovran of rings,
friend-of-his-folk, from my father took me,
had me, and held me, Hrethel the king,
with food and fee, faithful in kinship.
Ne'er, while I lived there, he loathlier found me,
bairn in the burg, than his birthright sons,

Herebeald and Haethcyn and Hygelac mine.
For the eldest of these, by unmeet chance,
by kinsman's deed, was the death-bed strewn,
when Haethcyn killed him with horny bow,
his own dear liege laid low with an arrow,
missed the mark and his mate shot down,
one brother the other, with bloody shaft.
A feeless fight, {32b} and a fearful sin,
horror to Hrethel; yet, hard as it was,
unavenged must the atheling die!
Too awful it is for an aged man
to bide and bear, that his bairn so young
rides on the gallows. A rime he makes,
sorrow-song for his son there hanging
as rapture of ravens; no rescue now
can come from the old, disabled man!
Still is he minded, as morning breaks,
of the heir gone elsewhere; {32c} another he hopes not
he will bide to see his burg within
as ward for his wealth, now the one has found
doom of death that the deed incurred.
Forlorn he looks on the lodge of his son,
wine-hall waste and wind-swept chambers
reft of revel. The rider sleepeth,
the hero, far-hidden; {32d} no harp resounds,
in the courts no wassail, as once was heard.

XXXIII

"THEN he goes to his chamber, a grief-song chants
alone for his lost. Too large all seems,
homestead and house. So the helmet-of-Weders
hid in his heart for Herebeald
waves of woe. No way could he take
to avenge on the slayer slaughter so foul;
nor e'en could he harass that hero at all
with loathing deed, though he loved him not.
And so for the sorrow his soul endured,
men's gladness he gave up and God's light chose.
Lands and cities he left his sons
(as the wealthy do) when he went from earth.
There was strife and struggle 'twixt Swede and Geat
o'er the width of waters; war arose,
hard battle-horror, when Hrethel died,
and Ongentheow's offspring grew
strife-keen, bold, nor brooked o'er the seas
pact of peace, but pushed their hosts
to harass in hatred by Hreosnabeorh.
Men of my folk for that feud had vengeance,
for woful war ('tis widely known),
though one of them bought it with blood of his heart,
a bargain hard: for Haethcyn proved
fatal that fray, for the first-of-Geats.
At morn, I heard, was the murderer killed
by kinsman for kinsman, {33a} with clash of sword,

when Ongentheow met Efor there.
Wide split the war-helm: wan he fell,
hoary Scylfing; the hand that smote him
of feud was mindful, nor flinched from the death-blow.
-- "For all that he {33b} gave me, my gleaming sword
repaid him at war, -- such power I wielded, --
for lordly treasure: with land he entrusted me,
homestead and house. He had no need
from Swedish realm, or from Spear-Dane folk,
or from men of the Gifths, to get him help, --
some warrior worse for wage to buy!
Ever I fought in the front of all,
sole to the fore; and so shall I fight
while I bide in life and this blade shall last
that early and late hath loyal proved
since for my doughtiness Daeghrefn fell,
slain by my hand, the Hugas' champion.
Nor fared he thence to the Frisian king
with the booty back, and breast-adornments;
but, slain in struggle, that standard-bearer
fell, atheling brave. Not with blade was he slain,
but his bones were broken by brawny gripe,
his heart-waves stilled. -- The sword-edge now,
hard blade and my hand, for the hoard shall strive."
Beowulf spake, and a battle-vow made
his last of all: "I have lived through many
wars in my youth; now once again,
old folk-defender, feud will I seek,
do doughty deeds, if the dark destroyer
forth from his cavern come to fight me!"
Then hailed he the helmeted heroes all,
for the last time greeting his liegemen dear,
comrades of war: "I should carry no weapon,
no sword to the serpent, if sure I knew
how, with such enemy, else my vows
I could gain as I did in Grendel's day.
But fire in this fight I must fear me now,
and poisonous breath; so I bring with me
breastplate and board. {33c} From the barrow's keeper
no footbreadth flee I. One fight shall end
our war by the wall, as Wyrd allots,
all mankind's master. My mood is bold
but forbears to boast o'er this battling-flyer.
-- Now abide by the barrow, ye breastplate-mailed,
ye heroes in harness, which of us twain
better from battle-rush bear his wounds.
Wait ye the finish. The fight is not yours,
nor meet for any but me alone
to measure might with this monster here
and play the hero. Hardily I
shall win that wealth, or war shall seize,
cruel killing, your king and lord!"
Up stood then with shield the sturdy champion,
stayed by the strength of his single manhood,
and hardy 'neath helmet his harness bore
under cleft of the cliffs: no coward's path!
Soon spied by the wall that warrior chief,

survivor of many a victory-field
where foemen fought with furious clashings,
an arch of stone; and within, a stream
that broke from the barrow. The brooklet's wave
was hot with fire. The hoard that way
he never could hope unharmed to near,
or endure those deeps, {33d} for the dragon's flame.
Then let from his breast, for he burst with rage,
the Weder-Geat prince a word outgo;
stormed the stark-heart; stern went ringing
and clear his cry 'neath the cliff-rocks gray.
The hoard-guard heard a human voice;
his rage was enkindled. No respite now
for pact of peace! The poison-breath
of that foul worm first came forth from the cave,
hot reek-of-fight: the rocks resounded.
Stout by the stone-way his shield he raised,
lord of the Geats, against the loathed-one;
while with courage keen that coiled foe
came seeking strife. The sturdy king
had drawn his sword, not dull of edge,
heirloom old; and each of the two
felt fear of his foe, though fierce their mood.
Stoutly stood with his shield high-raised
the warrior king, as the worm now coiled
together amain: the mailed-one waited.
Now, spire by spire, fast sped and glided
that blazing serpent. The shield protected,
soul and body a shorter while
for the hero-king than his heart desired,
could his will have wielded the welcome respite
but once in his life! But Wyrd denied it,
and victory's honors. -- His arm he lifted
lord of the Geats, the grim foe smote
with atheling's heirloom. Its edge was turned
brown blade, on the bone, and bit more feebly
than its noble master had need of then
in his baleful stress. -- Then the barrow's keeper
waxed full wild for that weighty blow,
cast deadly flames; wide drove and far
those vicious fires. No victor's glory
the Geats' lord boasted; his brand had failed,
naked in battle, as never it should,
excellent iron! -- 'Twas no easy path
that Ecgtheow's honored heir must tread
over the plain to the place of the foe;
for against his will he must win a home
elsewhere far, as must all men, leaving
this lapsing life! -- Not long it was
ere those champions grimly closed again.
The hoard-guard was heartened; high heaved his breast
once more; and by peril was pressed again,
enfolded in flames, the folk-commander!
Nor yet about him his band of comrades,
sons of athelings, armed stood
with warlike front: to the woods they bent them,
their lives to save. But the soul of one

with care was cumbered. Kinship true
can never be marred in a noble mind!

XXXIV

WIGLAF his name was, Weohstan's son,
linden-thane loved, the lord of Scylfings,
Aelfhere's kinsman. His king he now saw
with heat under helmet hard oppressed.
He minded the prizes his prince had given him,
wealthy seat of the Waegmunding line,
and folk-rights that his father owned
Not long he lingered. The linden yellow,
his shield, he seized; the old sword he drew: --
as heirloom of Eanmund earth-dwellers knew it,
who was slain by the sword-edge, son of Ohtere,
friendless exile, erst in fray
killed by Weohstan, who won for his kin
brown-bright helmet, breastplate ringed,
old sword of Eotens, Onela's gift,
weeds of war of the warrior-thane,
battle-gear brave: though a brother's child
had been felled, the feud was unfelt by Onela. {34a}
For winters this war-gear Weohstan kept,
breastplate and board, till his bairn had grown
earlship to earn as the old sire did:
then he gave him, mid Geats, the gear of battle,
portion huge, when he passed from life,
fared aged forth. For the first time now
with his leader-lord the liegeman young
was bidden to share the shock of battle.
Neither softened his soul, nor the sire's bequest
weakened in war. {34b} So the worm found out
when once in fight the foes had met!
Wiglaf spake, -- and his words were sage;
sad in spirit, he said to his comrades: --
"I remember the time, when mead we took,
what promise we made to this prince of ours
in the banquet-hall, to our breaker-of-rings,
for gear of combat to give him requital,
for hard-sword and helmet, if hap should bring
stress of this sort! Himself who chose us
from all his army to aid him now,
urged us to glory, and gave these treasures,
because he counted us keen with the spear
and hardy 'neath helm, though this hero-work
our leader hoped unhelped and alone
to finish for us, -- folk-defender
who hath got him glory greater than all men
for daring deeds! Now the day is come
that our noble master has need of the might
of warriors stout. Let us stride along
the hero to help while the heat is about him
glowing and grim! For God is my witness
I am far more fain the fire should seize

along with my lord these limbs of mine! {34c}
Unsuiting it seems our shields to bear
homeward hence, save here we essay
to fell the foe and defend the life
of the Weders' lord. I wot 'twere shame
on the law of our land if alone the king
out of Geatish warriors woe endured
and sank in the struggle! My sword and helmet,
breastplate and board, for us both shall serve!"
Through slaughter-reek strode he to succor his chieftain,
his battle-helm bore, and brief words spake: --
"Beowulf dearest, do all bravely,
as in youthful days of yore thou vowedst
that while life should last thou wouldest let no wise
thy glory droop! Now, great in deeds,
atheling steadfast, with all thy strength
shield thy life! I will stand to help thee."
At the words the worm came once again,
murderous monster mad with rage,
with fire-billows flaming, its foes to seek,
the hated men. In heat-waves burned
that board {34d} to the boss, and the breastplate failed
to shelter at all the spear-thane young.
Yet quickly under his kinsman's shield
went eager the earl, since his own was now
all burned by the blaze. The bold king again
had mind of his glory: with might his glaive
was driven into the dragon's head, --
blow nerved by hate. But Naegling {34e} was shivered,
broken in battle was Beowulf's sword,
old and gray. 'Twas granted him not
that ever the edge of iron at all
could help him at strife: too strong was his hand,
so the tale is told, and he tried too far
with strength of stroke all swords he wielded,
though sturdy their steel: they steaded him nought.
Then for the third time thought on its feud
that folk-destroyer, fire-dread dragon,
and rushed on the hero, where room allowed,
battle-grim, burning; its bitter teeth
closed on his neck, and covered him
with waves of blood from his breast that welled.

XXXV

'TWAS now, men say, in his sovran's need
that the earl made known his noble strain,
craft and keenness and courage enduring.
Heedless of harm, though his hand was burned,
hardy-hearted, he helped his kinsman.
A little lower the loathsome beast
he smote with sword; his steel drove in
bright and burnished; that blaze began
to lose and lessen. At last the king
wielded his wits again, war-knife drew,

a biting blade by his breastplate hanging,
and the Weders'-helm smote that worm asunder,
felled the foe, flung forth its life.
So had they killed it, kinsmen both,
athelings twain: thus an earl should be
in danger's day! -- Of deeds of valor
this conqueror's-hour of the king was last,
of his work in the world. The wound began,
which that dragon-of-earth had erst inflicted,
to swell and smart; and soon he found
in his breast was boiling, baleful and deep,
pain of poison. The prince walked on,
wise in his thought, to the wall of rock;
then sat, and stared at the structure of giants,
where arch of stone and steadfast column
upheld forever that hall in earth.
Yet here must the hand of the henchman peerless
lave with water his winsome lord,
the king and conqueror covered with blood,
with struggle spent, and unspan his helmet.
Beowulf spake in spite of his hurt,
his mortal wound; full well he knew
his portion now was past and gone
of earthly bliss, and all had fled
of his file of days, and death was near:
"I would fain bestow on son of mine
this gear of war, were given me now
that any heir should after me come
of my proper blood. This people I ruled
fifty winters. No folk-king was there,
none at all, of the neighboring clans
who war would wage me with 'warriors'-friends' {35a}
and threat me with horrors. At home I bided
what fate might come, and I cared for mine own;
feuds I sought not, nor falsely swore
ever on oath. For all these things,
though fatally wounded, fain am I!
From the Ruler-of-Man no wrath shall seize me,
when life from my frame must flee away,
for killing of kinsmen! Now quickly go
and gaze on that hoard 'neath the hoary rock,
Wiglaf loved, now the worm lies low,
sleeps, heart-sore, of his spoil bereaved.
And fare in haste. I would fain behold
the gorgeous heirlooms, golden store,
have joy in the jewels and gems, lay down
softlier for sight of this splendid hoard
my life and the lordship I long have held."

XXXVI

I HAVE heard that swiftly the son of Weohstan
at wish and word of his wounded king, --
war-sick warrior, -- woven mail-coat,
battle-sark, bore 'neath the barrow's roof.

Then the clansman keen, of conquest proud,
passing the seat, {36a} saw store of jewels
and glistening gold the ground along;
by the wall were marvels, and many a vessel
in the den of the dragon, the dawn-flier old:
unburnished bowls of bygone men
reft of richness; rusty helms
of the olden age; and arm-rings many
wondrously woven. -- Such wealth of gold,
booty from barrow, can burden with pride
each human wight: let him hide it who will! --
His glance too fell on a gold-wove banner
high o'er the hoard, of handiwork noblest,
brilliantly broidered; so bright its gleam,
all the earth-floor he easily saw
and viewed all these vessels. No vestige now
was seen of the serpent: the sword had ta'en him.
Then, I heard, the hill of its hoard was reft,
old work of giants, by one alone;
he burdened his bosom with beakers and plate
at his own good will, and the ensign took,
brightest of beacons. -- The blade of his lord
-- its edge was iron -- had injured deep
one that guarded the golden hoard
many a year and its murder-fire
spread hot round the barrow in horror-billows
at midnight hour, till it met its doom.
Hasted the herald, the hoard so spurred him
his track to retrace; he was troubled by doubt,
high-souled hero, if haply he'd find
alive, where he left him, the lord of Weders,
weakening fast by the wall of the cave.
So he carried the load. His lord and king
he found all bleeding, famous chief
at the lapse of life. The liegeman again
plashed him with water, till point of word
broke through the breast-hoard. Beowulf spake,
sage and sad, as he stared at the gold. --
"For the gold and treasure, to God my thanks,
to the Wielder-of-Wonders, with words I say,
for what I behold, to Heaven's Lord,
for the grace that I give such gifts to my folk
or ever the day of my death be run!
Now I've bartered here for booty of treasure
the last of my life, so look ye well
to the needs of my land! No longer I tarry.
A barrow bid ye the battle-fanned raise
for my ashes. 'Twill shine by the shore of the flood,
to folk of mine memorial fair
on Hrones Headland high uplifted,
that ocean-wanderers oft may hail
Beowulf's Barrow, as back from far
they drive their keels o'er the darkling wave."
From his neck he unclasped the collar of gold,
valorous king, to his vassal gave it
with bright-gold helmet, breastplate, and ring,
to the youthful thane: bade him use them in joy.

"Thou art end and remnant of all our race
the Waegmunding name. For Wyrd hath swept them,
all my line, to the land of doom,
earls in their glory: I after them go."
This word was the last which the wise old man
harbored in heart ere hot death-waves
of balefire he chose. From his bosom fled
his soul to seek the saints' reward.

XXXVII

IT was heavy hap for that hero young
on his lord beloved to look and find him
lying on earth with life at end,
sorrowful sight. But the slayer too,
awful earth-dragon, empty of breath,
lay felled in fight, nor, fain of its treasure,
could the writhing monster rule it more.
For edges of iron had ended its days,
hard and battle-sharp, hammers' leaving; {37a}
and that flier afar had fallen to ground
hushed by its hurt, its hoard all near,
no longer lusty aloft to whirl
at midnight, making its merriment seen,
proud of its prizes: prone it sank
by the handiwork of the hero-king.
Forsooth among folk but few achieve,
-- though sturdy and strong, as stories tell me,
and never so daring in deed of valor, --
the perilous breath of a poison-foe
to brave, and to rush on the ring-board hall,
whenever his watch the warden keeps
bold in the barrow. Beowulf paid
the price of death for that precious hoard;
and each of the foes had found the end
of this fleeting life.
Befell erelong
that the laggards in war the wood had left,
trothbreakers, cowards, ten together,
fearing before to flourish a spear
in the sore distress of their sovran lord.
Now in their shame their shields they carried,
armor of fight, where the old man lay;
and they gazed on Wiglaf. Wearied he sat
at his sovran's shoulder, shieldsman good,
to wake him with water. {37b} Nowise it availed.
Though well he wished it, in world no more
could he barrier life for that leader-of-battles
nor baffle the will of all-wielding God.
Doom of the Lord was law o'er the deeds
of every man, as it is to-day.
Grim was the answer, easy to get,
from the youth for those that had yielded to fear!
Wiglaf spake, the son of Weohstan, --
mournful he looked on those men unloved: --

"Who sooth will speak, can say indeed
that the ruler who gave you golden rings
and the harness of war in which ye stand
-- for he at ale-bench often-times
bestowed on hall-folk helm and breastplate,
lord to liegemen, the likeliest gear
which near of far he could find to give, --
threw away and wasted these weeds of battle,
on men who failed when the foemen came!
Not at all could the king of his comrades-in-arms
venture to vaunt, though the Victory-Wielder,
God, gave him grace that he got revenge
sole with his sword in stress and need.
To rescue his life, 'twas little that I
could serve him in struggle; yet shift I made
(hopeless it seemed) to help my kinsman.
Its strength ever waned, when with weapon I struck
that fatal foe, and the fire less strongly
flowed from its head. -- Too few the heroes
in throe of contest that thronged to our king!
Now gift of treasure and girding of sword,
joy of the house and home-delight
shall fail your folk; his freehold-land
every clansman within your kin
shall lose and leave, when lords high-born
hear afar of that flight of yours,
a fameless deed. Yea, death is better
for liegemen all than a life of shame!"

XXXVIII

THAT battle-toil bade he at burg to announce,
at the fort on the cliff, where, full of sorrow,
all the morning earls had sat,
daring shieldsmen, in doubt of twain:
would they wail as dead, or welcome home,
their lord beloved? Little {38a} kept back
of the tidings new, but told them all,
the herald that up the headland rode. --
"Now the willing-giver to Weder folk
in death-bed lies; the Lord of Geats
on the slaughter-bed sleeps by the serpent's deed!
And beside him is stretched that slayer-of-men
with knife-wounds sick: {38b} no sword availed
on the awesome thing in any wise
to work a wound. There Wiglaf sitteth,
Weohstan's bairn, by Beowulf's side,
the living earl by the other dead,
and heavy of heart a head-watch {38c} keeps
o'er friend and foe. -- Now our folk may look
for waging of war when once unhidden
to Frisian and Frank the fall of the king
is spread afar. -- The strife began
when hot on the Hugas {38d} Hygelac fell
and fared with his fleet to the Frisian land.

Him there the Hetwaras humbled in war,
plied with such prowess their power o'erwhelming
that the bold-in-battle bowed beneath it
and fell in fight. To his friends no wise
could that earl give treasure! And ever since
the Merowings' favor has failed us wholly.
Nor aught expect I of peace and faith
from Swedish folk. 'Twas spread afar
how Ongentheow reft at Ravenswood
Haethcyn Hrethling of hope and life,
when the folk of Geats for the first time sought
in wanton pride the Warlike-Scylfings.
Soon the sage old sire {38e} of Ohtere,
ancient and awful, gave answering blow;
the sea-king {38f} he slew, and his spouse redeemed,
his good wife rescued, though robbed of her gold,
mother of Ohtere and Onela.
Then he followed his foes, who fled before him
sore beset and stole their way,
bereft of a ruler, to Ravenswood.

With his host he besieged there what swords had left,
the weary and wounded; woes he threatened
the whole night through to that hard-pressed throng:
some with the morrow his sword should kill,
some should go to the gallows-tree
for rapture of ravens. But rescue came
with dawn of day for those desperate men
when they heard the horn of Hygelac sound,
tones of his trumpet; the trusty king
had followed their trail with faithful band.

XXXIX

"THE bloody swath of Swedes and Geats
and the storm of their strife, were seen afar,
how folk against folk the fight had wakened.
The ancient king with his atheling band
sought his citadel, sorrowing much:
Ongentheow earl went up to his burg.
He had tested Hygelac's hardihood,
the proud one's prowess, would prove it no longer,
defied no more those fighting-wanderers
nor hoped from the seamen to save his hoard,
his bairn and his bride: so he bent him again,
old, to his earth-walls. Yet after him came
with slaughter for Swedes the standards of Hygelac
o'er peaceful plains in pride advancing,
till Hrethelings fought in the fenced town. {39a}
Then Ongentheow with edge of sword,
the hoary-bearded, was held at bay,
and the folk-king there was forced to suffer
Eofor's anger. In ire, at the king
Wulf Wonreding with weapon struck;
and the chieftain's blood, for that blow, in streams

flowed 'neath his hair. No fear felt he,
stout old Scylfing, but straightway repaid
in better bargain that bitter stroke
and faced his foe with fell intent.
Nor swift enough was the son of Wonred
answer to render the aged chief;
too soon on his head the helm was cloven;
blood-bedecked he bowed to earth,
and fell adown; not doomed was he yet,
and well he waxed, though the wound was sore.
Then the hardy Hygelac-thane, {39b}
when his brother fell, with broad brand smote,
giants' sword crashing through giants'-helm
across the shield-wall: sank the king,
his folk's old herdsman, fatally hurt.
There were many to bind the brother's wounds
and lift him, fast as fate allowed
his people to wield the place-of-war.
But Eofor took from Ongentheow,
earl from other, the iron-breastplate,
hard sword hilted, and helmet too,
and the hoar-chief's harness to Hygelac carried,
who took the trappings, and truly promised
rich fee 'mid folk, -- and fulfilled it so.
For that grim strife gave the Geatish lord,
Hrethel's offspring, when home he came,
to Eofor and Wulf a wealth of treasure,
Each of them had a hundred thousand {39c}
in land and linked rings; nor at less price reckoned
mid-earth men such mighty deeds!
And to Eofor he gave his only daughter
in pledge of grace, the pride of his home.

"Such is the feud, the foeman's rage,
death-hate of men: so I deem it sure
that the Swedish folk will seek us home
for this fall of their friends, the fighting-Scylfings,
when once they learn that our warrior leader
lifeless lies, who land and hoard
ever defended from all his foes,
furthered his folk's weal, finished his course
a hardy hero. -- Now haste is best,
that we go to gaze on our Geatish lord,
and bear the bountiful breaker-of-rings
to the funeral pyre. No fragments merely
shall burn with the warrior. Wealth of jewels,
gold untold and gained in terror,
treasure at last with his life obtained,
all of that booty the brands shall take,
fire shall eat it. No earl must carry
memorial jewel. No maiden fair
shall wreath her neck with noble ring:
nay, sad in spirit and shorn of her gold,
oft shall she pass o'er paths of exile
now our lord all laughter has laid aside,
all mirth and revel. Many a spear
morning-cold shall be clasped amain,

lifted aloft; nor shall lilt of harp
those warriors wake; but the wan-hued raven,
fain o'er the fallen, his feast shall praise
and boast to the eagle how bravely he ate
when he and the wolf were wasting the slain."

So he told his sorrowful tidings,
and little {39d} he lied, the loyal man
of word or of work. The warriors rose;
sad, they climbed to the Cliff-of-Eagles,
went, welling with tears, the wonder to view.
Found on the sand there, stretched at rest,
their lifeless lord, who had lavished rings
of old upon them. Ending-day
had dawned on the doughty-one; death had seized
in woful slaughter the Weders' king.
There saw they, besides, the strangest being,
loathsome, lying their leader near,
prone on the field. The fiery dragon,
fearful fiend, with flame was scorched.
Reckoned by feet, it was fifty measures
in length as it lay. Aloft erewhile
it had revelled by night, and anon come back,
seeking its den; now in death's sure clutch
it had come to the end of its earth-hall joys.
By it there stood the stoups and jars;
dishes lay there, and dear-decked swords
eaten with rust, as, on earth's lap resting,
a thousand winters they waited there.
For all that heritage huge, that gold
of bygone men, was bound by a spell, {39e}
so the treasure-hall could be touched by none
of human kind, -- save that Heaven's King,
God himself, might give whom he would,
Helper of Heroes, the hoard to open, --
even such a man as seemed to him meet.

XL

A PERILOUS path, it proved, he {40a} trod
who heinously hid, that hall within,
wealth under wall! Its watcher had killed
one of a few, {40b} and the feud was avenged
in woful fashion. Wondrous seems it,
what manner a man of might and valor
oft ends his life, when the earl no longer
in mead-hall may live with loving friends.
So Beowulf, when that barrow's warden
he sought, and the struggle; himself knew not
in what wise he should wend from the world at last.
For {40c} princes potent, who placed the gold,
with a curse to doomsday covered it deep,
so that marked with sin the man should be,
hedged with horrors, in hell-bonds fast,
racked with plagues, who should rob their hoard.

Yet no greed for gold, but the grace of heaven,
ever the king had kept in view. {40d}
Wiglaf spake, the son of Weohstan: --
"At the mandate of one, oft warriors many
sorrow must suffer; and so must we.
The people's-shepherd showed not aught
of care for our counsel, king beloved!
That guardian of gold he should grapple not, urged we,
but let him lie where he long had been
in his earth-hall waiting the end of the world,
the hest of heaven. -- This hoard is ours
but grievously gotten; too grim the fate
which thither carried our king and lord.
I was within there, and all I viewed,
the chambered treasure, when chance allowed me
(and my path was made in no pleasant wise)
under the earth-wall. Eager, I seized
such heap from the hoard as hands could bear
and hurriedly carried it hither back
to my liege and lord. Alive was he still,
still wielding his wits. The wise old man
spake much in his sorrow, and sent you greetings
and bade that ye build, when he breathed no more,
on the place of his balefire a barrow high,
memorial mighty. Of men was he
worthiest warrior wide earth o'er
the while he had joy of his jewels and burg.
Let us set out in haste now, the second time
to see and search this store of treasure,
these wall-hid wonders, -- the way I show you, --
where, gathered near, ye may gaze your fill
at broad-gold and rings. Let the bier, soon made,
be all in order when out we come,
our king and captain to carry thither
-- man beloved -- where long he shall bide
safe in the shelter of sovran God."
Then the bairn of Weohstan bade command,
hardy chief, to heroes many
that owned their homesteads, hither to bring
firewood from far -- o'er the folk they ruled --
for the famed-one's funeral. " Fire shall devour
and wan flames feed on the fearless warrior
who oft stood stout in the iron-shower,
when, sped from the string, a storm of arrows
shot o'er the shield-wall: the shaft held firm,
feately feathered, followed the barb."
And now the sage young son of Weohstan
seven chose of the chieftain's thanes,
the best he found that band within,
and went with these warriors, one of eight,
under hostile roof. In hand one bore
a lighted torch and led the way.
No lots they cast for keeping the hoard
when once the warriors saw it in hall,
altogether without a guardian,
lying there lost. And little they mourned
when they had hastily haled it out,

dear-bought treasure! The dragon they cast,
the worm, o'er the wall for the wave to take,
and surges swallowed that shepherd of gems.
Then the woven gold on a wain was laden --
countless quite! -- and the king was borne,
hoary hero, to Hrones-Ness.

XLI

THEN fashioned for him the folk of Geats
firm on the earth a funeral-pile,
and hung it with helmets and harness of war
and breastplates bright, as the boon he asked;
and they laid amid it the mighty chieftain,
heroes mourning their master dear.
Then on the hill that hugest of balefires
the warriors wakened. Wood-smoke rose
black over blaze, and blent was the roar
of flame with weeping (the wind was still),
till the fire had broken the frame of bones,
hot at the heart. In heavy mood
their misery moaned they, their master's death.
Wailing her woe, the widow {41a} old,
her hair upbound, for Beowulf's death
sung in her sorrow, and said full oft
she dreaded the doleful days to come,
deaths enow, and doom of battle,
and shame. -- The smoke by the sky was devoured.
The folk of the Weders fashioned there
on the headland a barrow broad and high,
by ocean-farers far descried:
in ten days' time their toil had raised it,
the battle-brave's beacon. Round brands of the pyre
a wall they built, the worthiest ever
that wit could prompt in their wisest men.
They placed in the barrow that precious booty,
the rounds and the rings they had reft erewhile,
hardy heroes, from hoard in cave, --
trusting the ground with treasure of earls,
gold in the earth, where ever it lies
useless to men as of yore it was.
Then about that barrow the battle-keen rode,
atheling-born, a band of twelve,
lament to make, to mourn their king,
chant their dirge, and their chieftain honor.
They praised his earlship, his acts of prowess
worthily witnessed: and well it is
that men their master-friend mightily laud,
heartily love, when hence he goes
from life in the body forlorn away.

Thus made their mourning the men of Geatland,
for their hero's passing his hearth-companions:
quoth that of all the kings of earth,
of men he was mildest and most beloved,

to his kin the kindest, keenest for praise.

Footnotes:

{0a} Not, of course, Beowulf the Great, hero of the epic.

{0b} Kenning for king or chieftain of a comitatus: he breaks off gold from the spiral rings -- often worn on the arm -- and so rewards his followers.

{1a} That is, "The Hart," or "Stag," so called from decorations in the gables that resembled the antlers of a deer. This hall has been carefully described in a pamphlet by Heyne. The building was rectangular, with opposite doors -- mainly west and east -- and a hearth in the middle of the single room. A row of pillars down each side, at some distance from the walls, made a space which was raised a little above the main floor, and was furnished with two rows of seats. On one side, usually south, was the high-seat midway between the doors. Opposite this, on the other raised space, was another seat of honor. At the banquet soon to be described, Hrothgar sat in the south or chief high-seat, and Beowulf opposite to him. The scene for a flying (see below, v.499) was thus very effectively set.

Planks on trestles -- the "board" of later English literature -- formed the tables just in front of the long rows of seats, and were taken away after banquets, when the retainers were ready to stretch themselves out for sleep on the benches.

{1b} Fire was the usual end of these halls. See v. 781 below. One thinks of the splendid scene at the end of the Nibelungen, of the Nialssaga, of Saxo's story of Amlethus, and many a less famous instance.

{1c} It is to be supposed that all hearers of this poem knew how Hrothgar's hall was burnt, -- perhaps in the unsuccessful attack made on him by his son-in-law Ingeld.

{1d} A skilled minstrel. The Danes are heathens, as one is told presently; but this lay of beginnings is taken from Genesis.

{1e} A disturber of the border, one who sallies from his haunt in the fen and roams over the country near by. This probably pagan nuisance is now furnished with biblical credentials as a fiend or devil in good standing, so that all Christian Englishmen might read about him. "Grendel" may mean one who grinds and crushes.

{1f} Cain's.

{1g} Giants.

{2a} The smaller buildings within the main enclosure but separate from the hall.

{2b} Grendel.

{2c} "Sorcerers-of-hell."

{2d} Hrothgar, who is the "Scyldings'-friend" of 170.

{2e} That is, in formal or prescribed phrase.

{3a} Ship.

{3b} That is, since Beowulf selected his ship and led his men to the harbor.

{3c} One of the auxiliary names of the Geats.

{3d} Or: Not thus openly ever came warriors hither; yet...

{4a} Hrothgar.

{4b} Beowulf's helmet has several boar-images on it; he is the "man of war"; and the boar-helmet guards him as typical representative of the marching party as a whole. The boar was sacred to Freyr, who was the favorite god of the Germanic tribes about the North Sea and the Baltic. Rude representations of warriors show the boar on the helmet quite as large as the helmet itself.

{5a} Either merely paved, the strata via of the Romans, or else thought of as a sort of mosaic, an extravagant touch like the reckless waste of gold on the walls and roofs of a hall.

{6a} The nicor, says Bugge, is a hippopotamus; a walrus, says Ten Brink. But that water-goblin who covers the space from Old Nick of jest to the Neckan and Nix of poetry and tale, is all one needs, and Nicor is a good name for him.

{6b} His own people, the Geats.

{6c} That is, cover it as with a face-cloth. "There will be no need of funeral rites."

{6d} Personification of Battle.

{6e} The Germanic Vulcan.

{6f} This mighty power, whom the Christian poet can still revere, has here the general force of "Destiny."

{7a} There is no irrelevance here. Hrothgar sees in Beowulf's mission a heritage of duty, a return of the good offices which the Danish king rendered to Beowulf's father in time of dire need.

{7b} Money, for wergild, or man-price.

{7c} Ecgtheow, Beowulf's sire.

{8a} "Began the fight."

{8b} Breca.

{9a} Murder.

{10a} Beowulf, -- the "one."

{11a} That is, he was a "lost soul," doomed to hell.

{12a} Kenning for Beowulf.

{13a} "Guarded the treasure."

{13b} Sc. Heremod.

{13c} The singer has sung his lays, and the epic resumes its story. The time-relations are not altogether good in this long passage which describes the rejoicings of "the day after"; but the present shift from the riders on the road to the folk at the hall is not very violent, and is of a piece with the general style.

{14a} Unferth, Beowulf's sometime opponent in the flying.

{15a} There is no horrible inconsistency here such as the critics strive and cry about. In spite of the ruin that Grendel and Beowulf had made within the hall, the framework and roof held firm, and swift repairs made the interior habitable. Tapestries were hung on the walls, and willing hands prepared the banquet.

{15b} From its formal use in other places, this phrase, to take cup in hall, or "on the floor," would seem to mean that Beowulf stood up to receive his gifts, drink to the donor, and say thanks.

{15c} Kenning for sword.

{15d} Hrothgar. He is also the "refuge of the friends of Ing," below. Ing belongs to myth.

{15e} Horses are frequently led or ridden into the hall where folk sit at banquet: so in Chaucer's Squire's tale, in the ballad of King Estmere, and in the romances.

{16a} Man-price, wergild.

{16b} Beowulf's.

{16c} Hrothgar.

{16d} There is no need to assume a gap in the Ms. As before about Sigemund and Heremod, so now, though at greater length, about Finn and his feud, a lay is chanted or recited; and the epic poet, counting on his readers' familiarity with the story, -- a fragment of it still exists, -- simply gives the headings.

{16e} The exact story to which this episode refers in summary is not to be determined, but the following account of it is reasonable and has good support among scholars. Finn, a Frisian chieftain, who nevertheless has a "castle" outside the Frisian border, marries Hildeburh, a Danish princess; and her brother, Hnaef, with many other Danes, pays Finn a visit. Relations between the two peoples have been strained before. Something starts the old feud anew; and

the visitors are attacked in their quarters. Hnaef is killed; so is a son of Hildeburh. Many fall on both sides. Peace is patched up; a stately funeral is held; and the surviving visitors become in a way vassals or liegemen of Finn, going back with him to Frisia. So matters rest a while. Hengest is now leader of the Danes; but he is set upon revenge for his former lord, Hnaef. Probably he is killed in feud; but his clansmen, Guthlaf and Oslaf, gather at their home a force of sturdy Danes, come back to Frisia, storm Finn's stronghold, kill him, and carry back their kinswoman Hildeburh.

{16f} The "enemies" must be the Frisians.

{16g} Battlefield. -- Hengest is the "prince's thane," companion of Hnaef. "Folcwald's son" is Finn.

{16h} That is, Finn would govern in all honor the few Danish warriors who were left, provided, of course, that none of them tried to renew the quarrel or avenge Hnaef their fallen lord. If, again, one of Finn's Frisians began a quarrel, he should die by the sword.

{16i} Hnaef.

{16j} The high place chosen for the funeral: see description of Beowulf's funeral-pile at the end of the poem.

{16k} Wounds.

{17a} That is, these two Danes, escaping home, had told the story of the attack on Hnaef, the slaying of Hengest, and all the Danish woes. Collecting a force, they return to Frisia and kill Finn in his home.

{17b} Nephew to Hrothgar, with whom he subsequently quarrels, and elder cousin to the two young sons of Hrothgar and Wealhtheow, -- their natural guardian in the event of the king's death. There is something finely feminine in this speech of Wealhtheow's, apart from its somewhat irregular and irrelevant sequence of topics. Both she and her lord probably distrust Hrothulf; but she bids the king to be of good cheer, and, turning to the suspect, heaps affectionate assurances on his probity. "My own Hrothulf" will surely not forget these favors and benefits of the past, but will repay them to the orphaned boy.

{19a} They had laid their arms on the benches near where they slept.

{20a} He surmises presently where she is.

{20b} The connection is not difficult. The words of mourning, of acute grief, are said; and according to Germanic sequence of thought, inexorable here, the next and only topic is revenge. But is it possible? Hrothgar leads up to his appeal and promise with a skillful and often effective description of the horrors which surround the monster's home and await the attempt of an avenging foe.

{21a} Hrothgar is probably meant.

{21b} Meeting place.

{22a} Kenning for "sword." Hrunting is bewitched, laid under a spell of uselessness, along with all other swords.

{22b} This brown of swords, evidently meaning burnished, bright, continues to be a favorite adjective in the popular ballads.

{23a} After the killing of the monster and Grendel's decapitation.

{23b} Hrothgar.

{23c} The blade slowly dissolves in blood-stained drops like icicles.

{23d} Spear.

{24a} That is, "whoever has as wide authority as I have and can remember so far back so many instances of heroism, may well say, as I say, that no better hero ever lived than Beowulf."

{25a} That is, he is now undefended by conscience from the temptations (shafts) of the devil.

{25b} Kenning for the sun. -- This is a strange role for the raven. He is the warrior's bird of battle, exults in slaughter and carnage; his joy here is a compliment to the sunrise.

{26a} That is, he might or might not see Beowulf again. Old as he was, the latter chance was likely; but he clung to the former, hoping to see his young friend again "and exchange brave words in the hall."

{27a} With the speed of the boat.

{27b} Queen to Hygelac. She is praised by contrast with the antitype, Thryth, just as Beowulf was praised by contrast with Heremod.

{27c} Kenning for "wife."

{28a} Beowulf gives his uncle the king not mere gossip of his journey, but a statesmanlike forecast of the outcome of certain policies at the Danish court. Talk of interpolation here is absurd. As both Beowulf and Hygelac know, -- and the folk for whom the Beowulf was put together also knew, -- Froda was king of the Heathobards (probably the Langobards, once near neighbors of Angle and Saxon tribes on the continent), and had fallen in fight with the Danes. Hrothgar will set aside this feud by giving his daughter as "peace-weaver" and wife to the young king Ingeld, son of the slain Froda. But Beowulf, on general principles and from his observation of the particular case, foretells trouble. Note:

{28b} Play of shields, battle. A Danish warrior cuts down Froda in the fight, and takes his sword and armor, leaving them to a son. This son is selected to accompany his mistress, the young princess Freawaru, to her new home when she is Ingeld's queen. Heedlessly he

wears the sword of Froda in hall. An old warrior points it out to Ingeld, and eggs him on to vengeance. At his instigation the Dane is killed; but the murderer, afraid of results, and knowing the land, escapes. So the old feud must break out again.

{28c} That is, their disastrous battle and the slaying of their king.

{28d} The sword.

{28e} Beowulf returns to his forecast. Things might well go somewhat as follows, he says; sketches a little tragic story; and with this prophecy by illustration returns to the tale of his adventure.

{28f} Not an actual glove, but a sort of bag.

{29a} Hygelac.

{29b} This is generally assumed to mean hides, though the text simply says "seven thousand." A hide in England meant about 120 acres, though "the size of the acre varied."

{29c} On the historical raid into Frankish territory between 512 and 520 A.D. The subsequent course of events, as gathered from hints of this epic, is partly told in Scandinavian legend.

{29d} The chronology of this epic, as scholars have worked it out, would make Beowulf well over ninety years of age when he fights the dragon. But the fifty years of his reign need not be taken as historical fact.

{29e} The text is here hopelessly illegible, and only the general drift of the meaning can be rescued. For one thing, we have the old myth of a dragon who guards hidden treasure. But with this runs the story of some noble, last of his race, who hides all his wealth within this barrow and there chants his farewell to life's glories. After his death the dragon takes possession of the hoard and watches over it. A condemned or banished man, desperate, hides in the barrow, discovers the treasure, and while the dragon sleeps, makes off with a golden beaker or the like, and carries it for propitiation to his master. The dragon discovers the loss and exacts fearful penalty from the people round about.

{31a} Literally "loan-days," days loaned to man.

{31b} Chattuarii, a tribe that dwelt along the Rhine, and took part in repelling the raid of (Hygelac) Chocilaicus.

{31c} Onla, son of Ongentheow, who pursues his two nephews Eanmund and Eadgils to Heardred's court, where they have taken refuge after their unsuccessful rebellion. In the fighting Heardred is killed.

{32a} That is, Beowulf supports Eadgils against Onla, who is slain by Eadgils in revenge for the "care-paths" of exile into which Onla forced him.

{32b} That is, the king could claim no wergild, or man-price, from

one son for the killing of the other.

{32c} Usual euphemism for death.

{32d} Sc. in the grave.

{33a} Eofor for Wulf. -- The immediate provocation for Eofor in killing "the hoary Scylfing," Ongentheow, is that the latter has just struck Wulf down; but the king, Haethcyn, is also avenged by the blow. See the detailed description below.

{33b} Hygelac.

{33c} Shield.

{33d} The hollow passage.

{34a} That is, although Eanmund was brother's son to Onela, the slaying of the former by Weohstan is not felt as cause of feud, and is rewarded by gift of the slain man's weapons.

{34b} Both Wiglaf and the sword did their duty. -- The following is one of the classic passages for illustrating the comitatus as the most conspicuous Germanic institution, and its underlying sense of duty, based partly on the idea of loyalty and partly on the practical basis of benefits received and repaid.

{34c} Sc. "than to bide safely here," -- a common figure of incomplete comparison.

{34d} Wiglaf's wooden shield.

{34e} Gering would translate "kinsman of the nail," as both are made of iron.

{35a} That is, swords.

{36a} Where Beowulf lay.

{37a} What had been left or made by the hammer; well-forged.

{37b} Trying to revive him.

{38a} Nothing.

{38b} Dead.

{38c} Death-watch, guard of honor, "lyke-wake."

{38d} A name for the Franks.

{38e} Ongentheow.

{38f} Haethcyn.

{39a} The line may mean: till Hrethelings stormed on the hedged shields, -- i.e. the shield-wall or hedge of defensive war --

Hrethelings, of course, are Geats.

{39b} Eofor, brother to Wulf Wonreding.

{39c} Sc. "value in" hides and the weight of the gold.

{39d} Not at all.

{39e} Laid on it when it was put in the barrow. This spell, or in our days the "curse," either prevented discovery or brought dire ills on the finder and taker.

{40a} Probably the fugitive is meant who discovered the hoard. Ten Brink and Gering assume that the dragon is meant. "Hid" may well mean here "took while in hiding."

{40b} That is "one and a few others." But Beowulf seems to be indicated.

{40c} Ten Brink points out the strongly heathen character of this part of the epic. Beowulf's end came, so the old tradition ran, from his unwitting interference with spell-bound treasure.

{40d} A hard saying, variously interpreted. In any case, it is the somewhat clumsy effort of the Christian poet to tone down the heathenism of his material by an edifying observation.

{41a} Nothing is said of Beowulf's wife in the poem, but Bugge surmises that Beowulf finally accepted Hygd's offer of kingdom and hoard, and, as was usual, took her into the bargain.

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