

**BEOWULF, AN OLD
ENGLISH POEM,
TRANSLATED
INTO MODERN RHYMES**

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Beowulf, an Old English Poem, Translated into Modern Rhymes by H. W. Lumsden

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H. W. LUMSDEN

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BEOWULF.

AN OLD ENGLISH POEM

TRANSLATED INTO MODERN RHYMES

BY

LIEUT.-COLONEL H. W. LUMSDEN

LATE ROYAL ARTILLERY



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CONTENTS.

PART I.

GRENDEL.

	PAGE
I. THE SCYLDING KINGS	3
II. HROTHGAR AND GRENDEL	5
III. THE COMING OF BEOWULF	8
IV. HUNFERD AND BEOWULF	17
V. THE FIGHT WITH GRENDEL	21
VI. THE PURSUIT OF GRENDEL	26
VII. THE REJOICINGS AT HEOROT	28

PART II.

GRENDEL'S MOTHER.

I. THE WOMAN OF THE MERE	41
II. THE RETURN FROM THE BATTLE	51
III. THE PARTING OF BEOWULF AND HROTHGAR	55
IV. THE RETURN OF BEOWULF TO HIS OWN LAND	58

PART III.

THE FIRE DRAKE.

	PAGE
I. HOW THE DRAGON GOT THE HOARD AND WASTED THE LAND ...	69
II. BEOWULF'S SPEECH	74
III. THE FIGHT WITH THE DRAGON	78
IV. THE DEATH OF BEOWULF	83
V. WIGLAF AND THE DASTARDS	86
VI. THE MESSAGE HOME	88
VII. THE BURNING OF BEOWULF'S BODY	92
NOTES	97

PART I.
GRENDL.

THE ARGUMENT.

Hrothgar the Scylding, the son of Healfdene, King of the Danes, builds a great mead-hall and calls it Heorot. There he dwells at peace dealing gifts to his people, and every day at the feast is joyous noise of song. But the fiend Grendel, vexed at the happiness of the Danes, comes down from the misty moors, and nightly kills and devours the sleepers in the hall. Twelve years this trouble lasts, and Hrothgar and his thanes are helpless and full of grief.

Beowulf the Scylding, the son of Ecgtheow, and nephew of Higelac King of the Weder-Goths, makes ready a ship and sails to carry aid to Hrothgar in his need. The King bids him welcome, and gladly gives him leave to do battle with Grendel. At the feast Hunferd taunts Beowulf with having been beaten in a swimming match, and Beowulf tells the true story. Hrothgar and the Queen Wælftheow are well pleased, and after the banquet the King gives the hall in charge to Beowulf and his comrades.

Grendel comes, and kills one of the men, but is seized by Beowulf, and hardly escapes, wounded to death, and leaving his arm behind him in Beowulf's grasp.

There is great joy in Heorot, and at night Hrothgar's thanes sleep in the hall as they did long ago.

B E O W U L F .

I.

THE SCYLDING KINGS.

Lo ! we have heard of glory won by Gar-Dane Kings of old,
And' mighty deeds these princes wrought. Oft with his warriors bold
Since first an outcast he was found, did Scyld the Scefing hurl
From their mead-benches many a folk, and frighted many an earl.
Therein he took his pleasure, and waxed great beneath the sky,
And throve in worship, till to him all folk that dwelt hard by,
And o'er the whale-path, tribute paid, and did his word obey.
Good king was he !

To him was born an heir in after day,
A child in hall ; the gift of God to glad the people sent ;
For He had seen the long sore straits they, lordless, underwent.
And therefore did the Prince of life, the Lord of glory, shower
All worldly praise on him, the famed Beowulf ; and the power
Of Scyld's great heir spread far and wide through all the Danish land.
So must the wise man gift and fee deal forth with open hand

Within his father's hall ; thereby, in age and time of fight,
That comrades true may stand by him and help the folk aright—
In every people men shall thrive by worthy deeds alone !

Then to God's hands went mighty Scyld, his fated hour made known,
And to the shore his comrades dear him carried as he bade
While yet as Scylding's chief beloved he long the people swayed.

Ready at hithe the ringed-stem lay,—meet for a prince's bier—
Shining like ice—and to her lap they bore their chieftain dear ;
Hard by the mast they laid him down, their glorious lord of rings.
Well laden was the bark with wealth and far-brought precious things ;
In comelier wise no keel I trow before did ever sail,
With weapons decked, and battle-weed, and bills, and coats of mail.
Much treasure lay upon his breast, with him afar to go
Into the might of waves. No lesser gifts did they bestow—
A people's gifts—than they who sent him forth in days of old
O'er seas, a little child, alone. And now a crest of gold
High o'er his head they raised aloft ; and gave him to the flood
To bear away to open sea, with grief and mourning mood.
But not the wisest man in hall, nor bravest under heaven
Can ever tell for sooth to whom that lordly freight was driven.*

Then, when his father passed from earth Beowulf long while reigned,
The Scylding people's king beloved, and fame 'mong nations gained ;
Till after him high Healfdene rose, and old and fierce in fight
Ruled the glad Scyldings all his life. Four children numbered right
From him, the leader of the hosts, into the world awoke ;

* See Note A.