

XXXV.

BEOWULF'S REMINISCENCES

Beowulf spake then,

Boast-words uttered—the latest occasion:

“I braved in my youth-days battles unnumbered;

Still am I willing the struggle to look for,

Fame-deeds perform, folk-warden prudent,

If the hateful despoiler forth from his cavern

Seeketh me out!” Each of the heroes,

Helm-bearers sturdy, he thereupon greeted

Belovèd co-liegemen—his last salutation:

“No brand would I bear, no blade for the dragon,

Wist I a way my word-boast to 'complish

Else with the monster, as with Grendel I did it;

But fire in the battle hot I expect there,

Furious flame-burning: so I fixed on my body

Target and war-mail. The ward of the barrow

I'll not flee from a foot-length, the foeman uncanny.

At the wall 'twill befall us as Fate decreeth,

Each one's Creator. I am eager in spirit,

With the wingèd war-hero to away with all boasting.

Bide on the barrow with burnies protected,

Earls in armor, which of us two may better

Bear his disaster, when the battle is over.

'Tis no matter of yours, and man cannot do it,

But me and me only, to measure his strength with
The monster of malice, might-deeds to 'complish.
I with prowess shall gain the gold, or the battle,
Direful death-woe will drag off your ruler!"