

Forfatter: Grundtvig, N. F. S.

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arise in the country where the very children of her poetry should have attempted and achieved such master-strokes of genius.

There can be little advantage in offering reasons why this poem, though spoken highly of by Wanley, should remain unnoticed till the present age, but some account of the first and only edition of it may be necessary. In the year 1783, the late John Thorkelin was sent to England by the Danish Government, where he made a transcript of the only manuscript containing it, and which was then considerably damaged by the fire of 1731 in the Cottonian Library. At length, in the year 1815, he gave it to the world, at the recommendation and at the charge of a Danish nobleman, Count Bulow, prefixing to it a singular title, and accompanying it with an equally singular Latin version. Now, though the transcript on the whole was accurately done, yet the printed text is so erroneous, that it can only be exceeded by the translation; and the edition, therefore, reflects disgrace rather than credit on the country where it appeared. The late Count Bulow was aware of this, and having prevailed upon me to prepare a Danish translation, which has now been published some years, he was also solicitous that I should undertake a new edition of the original, which was likewise to have been published at his charge. This, at the time, I declined, chiefly because I held it necessary to collate the original. This collation I have now made; and should the poem not appear in England, I shall still feel myself called upon to publish it at home.

Beowulf, therefore, with an English introduction and translation, such as, by the assistance of my English friends, I might be able to make them, would fill two volumes of this intended series. The third would contain Caedmon's poetical paraphrase of Genesis, with the continuations or imitations that are to be found in the old edition itself, in the Heptateuch, or elsewhere.

According to Bede, in his Ecclesiastical History, there arose, at the close of the seventh century, an eminent Anglo-Saxon poet of the name of Caedmon, who confined himself to religious subjects, and in particular to a paraphrase of the historical books of Scripture. In the Junian collection at Oxford, there is still preserved an