

Forfatter: Grundtvig, N. F. S.

Titel: Udrag fra Bibliotheca Anglo-Saxonica. Prospectus, and Proposals of a Subscription, for the Publication of the Most Valuable Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts, Illustrative of the Early Poetry and Literature of Our Language. Most of Which Have Never Yet Been Printed

Citation: Grundtvig, N. F. S.: "Grundtvigs værker", i Grundtvig, N. F. S.: *Grundtvigs værker*, Faculty of Arts, Aarhus University, s. 4. Onlineudgave fra Grundtvigs Værker: https://tekster.kb.dk/text/gv-1830_487A-txt-shoot-idm166.pdf (tilgået 29. april 2024)

Anvendt udgave: Grundtvigs værker

Ophavsret: Materialet er dedikeret til public domain. Du kan kopiere, ændre, distribuere og fremføre værket, også til kommercielle formål, uden at bede om tilladelse. Husk dog altid at kreditere ophavsmanden.

[Læs CC0-erklæringen](#)

It would, however, be a vain endeavour on my part to oppose the high opinion I entertain of the Anglo-Saxon remains to the very low one which has been formed by those gentlemen to whom I have referred, if the English Public were not familiar with the well-known truth, that facts are stubborn things, which can never be made to bend to the finest abstract reasoning in the world. I shall, therefore, only ask for the reader's attention to the facts I am about to submit, and which, once perused, I have no doubt that we shall at least agree upon this point—that the most astonishing and most interesting marvel in the whole of history being the creation of the modern civilized world, this great event will never be understood nor duly explained without a familiar acquaintance with those very Anglo-Saxons of whom it has hitherto been held, that no gentleman could wish to be introduced to them. For the fact, that there once existed a civilized world limited to the shores of the Mediterranean Sea, is as unquestionable as that a new one arose out of the chaos of those barbarous tribes who destroyed the Western Empire; and it is equally well known, that at the very time when civilization expired in Italy under

Those rods of scorpions and those whips of steel

which the Lombards did not fail to apply, it sprang into existence in England. There is, therefore, no fact more pregnant of events in the whole of modern history, than the mission of Austin to this country, where Christianity, learning, and, in a word, all that was once expressed by the term 'humanity,' found not only a shelter but a nursing-school, and from whence, in the process of time, it was to spread round the Baltic and the Scackerak. With Theodore of Greece and Adrian of Africa, classical literature, in the full extent to which it was then cultivated, was introduced into England; and from the beginning of the eighth century to the end of the eleventh she appears—not even excluding a comparison with the Eastern Empire—to have been the most truly civilized country on the globe. It was here that a whole nation listened to the songs of Caedmon and of Alcuin in their mother tongue, while in France and Italy nothing was heard but a jargon of barbarous sounds. It was here that, in the eighth century, Beda and Alcuin shed a lustre, by their classical attainments, over the whole of Europe; and it was from hence that Charlemagne, the sovereign of the greater portion of the Western World, was compelled to seek for an instructor. Even in these facts there is something dazzling, something which arrests the attention, and demands the homage of our respect; but, what is far more memorable and important in its consequences, it was Anglo-Saxon missionaries who carried Christianity to Germany and the North of Europe—missionaries from a country which, having a literature of its own, in a language akin to that of Germany and Scandinavia, made that literature the example, and that school the pattern, of all the early literary attempts of those parts of the world. Even in Denmark, notwithstanding the Gospel was first preached there as early as the beginning of the ninth century, it is clear, that it was only when a close connexion with England took place under Canute, that Christianity began generally and publicly to exert those humanizing powers which it has shed wherever it has been duly planted; and equally clear it is, that the literature of Iceland, which principally flourished during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, is a pupil of the Anglo-Saxon school.