

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

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In Denmark, and in Germany, we should certainly feel disposed to answer such a question as this with something not unlike a sarcasm; but I shall content myself with the simple observation, that there can be no guarantee for the intrinsic value of a book except the book itself, and, consequently, that we can only establish the fact in question by the publication of the book referred to. On this account it would be always desirable that the posthumous works of generations past should be published at the expense of those acquainted with them, or, at their request, by the government of the country; and it is in this way that the Icelandic literature of olden time has been treated in Denmark, till, at length, from the use which our poets and historians have made of these treasures, the public has been taught that these ancient books, though read by but a few, may thus indirectly, and by secondary means, prove both useful and entertaining to the many. In England such a custom has never prevailed, and hence it happens that the choicest relics of Anglo-Saxon literature, both in prose and verse, still remain, in one sense, unpublished; for they are either not printed at all, or, being so, they are such bare and meagre copies of the manuscripts, that, even if they were correct, they could only be considered in the light of transcripts. It is, therefore, only by the aid of those who are not insensible to the merits of these remains, and by the revival of a custom which appears now to have grown out of date,—a publication by subscription,—that any hope remains of accomplishing an end so desirable both for England in particular, and Europe at large.