

Forfatter: Grundtvig, N. F. S.

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And here a question arises as to an editor, who, conversant with the subject, might so far acquire the confidence of the public as to be deemed fitted for the task. When Messrs. Black, Young, and Young unexpectedly applied to me on the subject, notwithstanding the interest I have long felt in everything connected with it, I could not but hesitate to engage in it, both from the circumstance of my being a foreigner, and the calls of duty which bind me to my own country. But I have since thought there would be an idle and affected modesty in seeming to hesitate from any doubts I entertained of my relative fitness for the task; and yet, whatever I may be, or may presume of myself, at home, I am very sensible that I am but an obscure individual to the English public, and without this application I should never have ventured to come before them in the capacity of an advocate, as it were, for my poor unhappy brethren, those early Anglo-Saxon poets and divines who, for more than a thousand years, have been confined in those dark prison-houses which in this country I understand are so expressively termed *Presses*. But, during the two last summers, which, by the liberal support of the Danish government, I have spent in England, engaged in the examination of Anglo-Saxon manuscripts, it has been my good fortune to become acquainted with the most eminent native Anglo-Saxon scholars; and though I could not but regret that they were no way likely to engage in any edition of these works themselves, I take a pride in stating that they are willing and eager to recommend an edition undertaken by me. Under these circumstances I am not unwilling to try my chance of success, even though I should fail in exciting that interest for the subject which I desire. I shall, at least, have this satisfaction—that I have addressed the English public previous to any attempt I may make out of England, where, as one not altogether unknown, and an author of rather long standing, I might hope for a certain degree of success, though I could not but also feel myself in the ungracious situation of casting a reflection upon a country where I am satisfied no foreigner has ever been allowed a more liberal access to its unparalleled stores of ancient manuscripts. If I were an English and not a Danish poet and historian, I should apply to my country these striking lines of the immortal bard:

8— Duller should'st thou be than the fat weed
That rots itself in ease on Lethe's wharf,
Would'st thou not stir in this?

but, unable as I am to express my thoughts in the English language with even that energy which might prepossess the public in my favour, I shall have no reason to complain of my services being rejected if it shall appear that this indifference on their part is not to the subject, but to me as the Editor.