

Forfatter: Grundtvig, N. F. S.

Titel: Udrag fra History of the Northmen, or Danes and Normans, from the Earliest Times to the Conquest of England by William of Normandy

Citation: Grundtvig, N. F. S.: "Grundtvigs værker", i Grundtvig, N. F. S.: *Grundtvigs værker*, Faculty of Arts, Aarhus University, s. 443. Onlineudgave fra Grundtvigs Værker: https://tekster.kb.dk/text/gv-1831_494-txt-shoot-idm129.pdf (tilgået 23. 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 may, indeed, be said, that those who have hitherto wandered into the septentrional regions of literature, have been wanting in qualities which would have enabled them to bring to us materials likely to attract attention, and invite examination. They have written of an age long vanished, coldly and drily; and have brought from their researches only a few dull fragments, the mere bricks of an ancient temple, of whose pristine form they themselves have had a most dull conception. Among them has been no restorer of the Northern Parthenon. They have talked to us of the dead; and have presented to us their ragged garments, a shield and a sword, a broken lyre, perhaps some mouldering bones; and, above all, the lapidary inscriptions upon the antique tombs. But in their hands, the soul that animated the living men has wholly evaporated; the sparks that sprung up from those "hearts of fire," they have not known how to preserve. A time may yet arrive when, invoked by some master spirit, the ancient Northmen will come forth from their graves, and speak in words of life to us, their children. Our sympathies, hitherto almost barren as respects the past, might then become fruitful both for the past and for the future. There are within us, strings that would respond with exquisite vibration to the touch of a hand nerved with the power of ancient lore. Sir Walter made an experiment in his *Ivanhoe*. That was an appeal to what remains in us of Saxon feelings; and the appeal has been strongly felt—more strongly, perhaps, than any other he has made. Yet even that appeal was wanting in the great essential: *Ivanhoe* is an admirable picture of external manners—a happy, and for the most part, a judicious contrast between Saxon and Norman; but how little does the author portray of the inner man—of the characteristic of thought and expression which naturally grew out of the traditional history of these different races. True, this may not have been his object, nor, where so much has been done is it quite fair to complain that all has not been done. He has enticed, as it were, the reading world, not only of England, but of Europe—aye, and of the other hemisphere, into the domain of popular history. Into the portals that he has unlocked, the kempions of the North will one day enter. The vast theatre over which the ancient Goths walked, will again be opened; and their noble race will, in recreated living semblances, re-appear. Their old saying about "immortality on earth" is not yet proved to be a delusion. The privilege which mythology conferred upon poets alone, of plucking out of Hades that which they love, may be hereafter shared by historians. And for the true poet, a yet higher destiny may be reserved: he will still create, where the historian only records. He, as of old, will divide his soul with the dead; and vibrate from time that was, to time that is to be, careering in light and eloquence.