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AN OUTLINE HISTORY OF THE
ENGLISH LANGUAGE

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ENGLISH LANGUAGE

BY

OLIVER FARRAR EMERSON, Ph.D.

PROFESSOR OF RHETORIC AND ENGLISH PHILOLOGY IN WESTERN RESERVE
UNIVERSITY ; AUTHOR OF "THE HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH
LANGUAGE," "A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH
LANGUAGE," "A MIDDLE ENGLISH READER"

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PREFACE

The reception of the writer's larger books on the history of English has suggested one with still fewer details than the Brief History. In this Outline an attempt has been made to chronicle the general facts of our language development, the special influences of different periods, and the more important changes in the forms of words. Especially it emphasizes development by natural processes. It thus explains much that has often been set down in dogmatic statement only, or sometimes in a manner at variance with historic facts. It should therefore be useful in connection with the study of English grammar and English usage.

In the account of the modern period special attention has been given to the growing linguistic consciousness, to the beginnings of what we call purism, and the attempts to promote what is known as correctness in language. To this are added, in various places, the historical reasons for present use. The directions of change in the past are also

pointed out. While it is not intended to empha-
size rhetorical niceties, this Outline should be
helpful to those who would steer a safe course
between purism on the one side and too great
looseness of manner on the other. There is no
safer guide against extremes in either direction
than the history of past usage.

The general reader cannot be expected to take
much interest in philological details. Yet he may
be assumed to wish some acquaintance with the
development of his mother tongue. This Outline
is intended to make clear such facts and relations
as any intelligent reader may consider it his busi-
ness or pleasure to know.

O. F. E.

Cleveland, O.,
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I

THE BEGINNINGS AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF A STANDARD LANGUAGE

CHAPTER I

THE OLD ENGLISH PERIOD

THE story of the English language begins when Englishmen first came to Britain. These Englishmen were members of the Teutonic race, and English is therefore nearest akin to the other Teutonic languages. These are the extinct Gothic, the Scandinavian languages, and the Low and High German tongues. Still remoter relatives of English are the principal languages of Europe and Asia. English is therefore a sister tongue of Greek, Latin, Celtic, Balto-Slavic, and Indo-Iranian. But the relation of English to these does not concern us here. It will be enough for us to trace our language history since our Teutonic forefathers came to Britain.

The Teutons came to Britain in the first half of the fifth century. There they found the Celts, who had formerly possessed the entire island. These Celts had been conquered by the Romans under Julius Cæsar in the first century, and the Romans had held the island for more than three centuries. When they withdrew, at the beginning of the fifth century, the Celts were again masters, but were not long able to retain their power. Even during Roman occupation the Teutons had frequently attacked the island. When the Romans withdrew, the Teutonic invaders found the Celts no serious bar to settlement, or perhaps, as tradition says, they were called in to assist a British king in his wars.

The Teutons who first came to Britain were Jutes, from what is modern Jutland. They settled the southeast of England and the Isle of Wight, but were to play no prominent part in English history. Next came the Saxons from the coast of north Germany, and settled south of the Thames and on the north bank of the lower Thames. Last came the Angles, from what is now Angeln in Schleswig-Holstein, and occupied the eastern part of the island from the Thames almost to Scotland.

The traditional dates of these settlements cover the century from 449 to 547. We may safely say that, by the middle of the sixth century, all the south and east parts of Britain were possessed by our English ancestors.

Here on the threshold we may rightly inquire what makes up the history of a language. It is clearly not a record of councils which decided certain changes. It usually does not imply conscious change at all. It is rather a record of the unconscious changes by which speech, as a means of communication, conforms to the varying needs of a people. These may be treated under various heads. First, the gradual development of a national, or standard, language, out of the diverse usage of different districts. Second, the changes in the forms and features of words in different periods. Third, the history of the influences affecting the word-stock, or vocabulary. Fourth, the changes in the inflectional forms which show the relationships of words in the sentence.

The chronological divisions under which each of these subjects is best considered are three. From the earliest times to about 1100 the language is called Old English, or Anglo-Saxon. From 1100

to about 1500 is the Middle English period.
From 1500 to the present time we reckon
Modern English. Such dates, of course, mark
no violent changes. Yet the language of each
period can be seen to be considerably different
from that of an earlier or later time. Such
divisions are thus convenient stages in the jour-
ney from the language of the British Teutons
to that of English-speaking peoples to-day.

Our Teutonic ancestors were hardy sea rovers
of an adventurous race. They had already devel-
oped a high type of individual freedom. They
had a high conception of woman. Their religion
recognized the divine rulership of this world
and also personal immortality. They had settled
forms of administering justice and some idea of
elective kingship. They already had their songs
of heroism in battle, and possibly also their song
makers as a separate class. They had come into
slight contact with the Romans on the continent
and had adopted a few Latin words. They brought
with them the common alphabet of the Teutons,
the runes, and used them in divination and inscrip-
tions. Of other written records we know nothing,
and probably there were none at this early time.

The language of this people had all the characteristics of Teutonic. It had its own laws of accent. It had a distinctive pronunciation of certain consonants. Its inflectional system, though less elaborate than that of Latin, was more so than that of modern German. Its vocabulary was mainly unaffected by foreign influences. Its special features were a double inflection of adjectives and a past tense of most verbs with such a dental suffix as the *ed* (*d* or *t*) of present English.

The different tribes settling in Britain spoke somewhat different forms of the common language. The Jutes, in the southeast corner of the island, spoke what we call Kentish. The Saxons gave their name to the dialect which they used. These two are sometimes called Southern English. The language of the Angles, owing to political divisions of the people, became two dialects: Mercian between the Thames and the Humber rivers, and Northumbrian beyond the Humber. At this time, therefore, there was no single form of speech which was thought of as standard in our sense. This was natural, since there was as yet no national, as distinct from tribal, existence.

A part of the history of English concerns the

influence of other languages at various times. The
first of these to affect English, after the settlement
of Britain, was the Celtic. Many Celtic names of
places were adopted by the English, as of rivers,
mountains, even towns and villages. Of common
words only a few were taken over, no doubt largely
because the Celts had become a subject race, little
regarded by their conquerors. Even the place-
names are most common in the west and north,
which were not conquered until the English had
fully settled the south and east.

Owing to the previous Roman occupation of
Britain some few Latin words were also caught up
from the Celts. The more important Latin influ-
ence began with the conversion of the English to
Christianity. In 570 the Kentish king Æthelbert
married the French princess Bertha, who brought
to England a Christian bishop. In 596 Augustine
and a band of monks from Rome reached the island.
They had been sent by Pope Gregory I, who years
before had seen some fair-haired English slaves in
the Roman market and had resolved on their con-
version.[1] A little later the Northumbrian king
Eadwine married the Christian daughter of a

[1] See the account in Green's *Short History of the English People.*

Kentish king, and received with her a Christian priest. The final conversion of the Anglian kingdoms, however, was made by Scotch missionaries from the Irish monastery of Iona.

It is needless to say that Latin never became the language of the people as in Gaul and Spain. It always remained a learned language, used among scholars and in scholarly books. While it was also used in the English church service, the only approach to the people personally was through their own tongue. The Roman or Irish missionary was thus compelled to learn English. This led to translations into the native speech and to a written language. But with such constant use of Latin by scholars and priests, it is not strange that some Latin words should have become a part of the folk speech. Still more were used in English literature, but never became a part of the spoken language. The general form and structure of English was wholly unaffected by Latin.

The Christian missionaries brought with them a new form of the alphabet. They were accustomed to the Roman character as used in Ireland, and introduced this to the exclusion of all but two of the runes, those for *w* and *th*. The

Irish-Roman form thus established became general in the native literature. This was a distinct advantage, since the runes were little adapted to an easy and rapid use in manuscripts. Yet the runes were still occasionally employed for inscriptions, in charms and riddles, and here and there for a word or name in literature.

The first written literature of Old English belongs to the Anglian kingdoms. It is connected with the political supremacy of Northumbria in the seventh century. Here poetical tradition tells of the cowherd Cædmon (d. 680), who became inspired to paraphrase parts of the Bible. To him is attributed the poem called *Genesis;* and two others, *Exodus* and *Daniel,* belong to the same epoch. To the same general time belong certain poems of less Christian stamp. Such are *Widsith,* or the *Far Traveler,* the *Charms,* and the great epic *Beowulf.* A prose translation of part of the Bible was also made by the learned Bede (d. 735), though now entirely lost.

To Northumbria, or possibly to the next important kingdom of Mercia, belongs the great figure of this northern blossoming of our early literature. This is Cynewulf, who lived in the last of the

eighth and beginning of the ninth century. The runic form of his name occurs in three Christian poems, *Christ*, *Elene*, and *Juliana*, and he probably wrote several others. All bear evidence of a high poetic power for so early an age. They also show that, however rude the tongue of the Teutonic invaders, it was now a worthy medium for a great literature.

The native literature of Anglia is not the only witness to the learning of these early Englishmen. Latin and even Greek studies flourished. York and Canterbury became great centers of learning. The first produced Bishop Benedict (d. 690), Bede (d. 735), Archbishop Egbert (d. 7. 3), and Alcuin (d. 804), the councilor of Charlemagne; the second, Aldhelm (d. 709) and Bishop Daniel of Winchester (d. 744). The north sent Willibrord as missionary to the Frisians, as the south sent Winfrid (St. Boniface) to the Saxons of the continent. If Pope Gregory sent the first books to England in 601, the English were diligent collectors in later times. English libraries became famous even on the continent, and Alcuin urged Charlemagne to send thither for the books so much needed in his great reforms.

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Yet literary English in this early period had no uninterrupted history. It flourished in one division of the country or another, as one or another was politically powerful. The greatness of Northumbria was checked by the rising power of Mercia. This kingdom gained its greatest influence under Offa (757–796), and here learning flourished for a time. Then the Anglian literature gave way before another form of English. With the beginning of the ninth century both Northumbria and Mercia waned before the growing supremacy of the West Saxon kingdom. This new power was established by Egbert (802–837), and maintained by his sons, especially Alfred the Great (871–900).

With the rise of this southern kingdom Saxon English gained literary prominence. Winchester was then the capital of the country, and the language of the court and of court scribes would thus be West Saxon. Yet the language of this district was already called English, a name strictly belonging to the Anglian region. English was the name used in the *Chronicle* begun at Alfred's court, and by Alfred himself in his writings. The name Saxon, even in this region of Saxon supremacy,

had given way to that which has ever since held its place.

The stimulus to literature came from Alfred himself. He brought about a great reform in the schools, and a great literary revival. To him we owe the translation of Gregory's *Pastoral Care.* To his encouragement, if not to his hand, are due the English rendering of Orosius's *History of the World*, Boethius's *Consolation of Philosophy*, and Bede's *Ecclesiastical History of England*. Though little known now, these were great works for the period. The first complete *Chronicle* was also written in Alfred's reign, though no doubt based on earlier records. These are all prose works, and the revival under Alfred was mainly a prose revival. This was perhaps fortunate for the language, which now became a medium of expression in the simpler forms of speech itself. At the same time the older Anglian poetry was copied by Saxon scribes, and in the forms of Saxon speech it is mainly preserved to-day.

After Alfred's death there was a decline of Saxon literature, but it again revived in the last half of the tenth century. Then Bishop Dunstan of Worcester (d. 988) stimulated learning among

the clergy, and Bishop Æthelwold of Winchester (d. 984) founded English schools. The most important writer was the priest Ælfric. He translated parts of the *Old Testament*, wrote a series of *Homilies*, or sermons for the church year, and composed *Lives of the Saints*. Under Ælfric, Saxon English reached its highest literary development. Other important prose works of the time are the *Blickling Homilies*, a translation of the *Gospels*, and the monastic *Rule of Saint Benedict*. Poetry also appears in the stirring battle pieces, *Brunanburh* and *Maldon*, and the less excellent poetic dialogue, *Salomon and Saturn*.

Before the Saxon supremacy English was again influenced from without. This was due to settlement in England of the Danes, or people from Scandinavia and Denmark. As early as 787 they had first attacked Northumbria. In 870 they settled in East Anglia. Within a quarter of a century they had possessed Northumbria and Mercia, and were vigorously attacking Wessex. Driven from Wessex by Alfred, they still held the Danelaw, or eastern England from the Thames to the Tees. The Saxon power itself declined in the last of the tenth century, and Danish attacks were

renewed.   Finally, in 1016, a Danish king won the throne, and a Danish dynasty ruled England for a quarter of a century.

How extensive were the original Danish settlements, or how many Danes came with the new dynasty, cannot be known.   Yet the many place-names within the old Danelaw, the many personal names of Danish origin, and the number of words finally appearing in the language indicate a considerable Danish influence.   Such influence, however, was larger in the north and in the East Midlands than in the south.   For this reason few Danish words appear in Saxon literature.   They become more frequent in Middle English times, when literature again sprang up in the Anglian region.

Another foreign influence indirectly resulted from the coming of the Danes.   The English king Æthelred, deposed in 1013, took refuge in Normandy, whence he had married his wife.   His son Edward was reared at the Norman court and, on becoming king of England in 1042, brought with him many French nobles and priests.   These spoke French, and thus early began the influence of Norman French upon English.   This French influence

became more powerful at the conquest of England by William of Normandy in 1066. With William came more followers and friends who spoke French, so that French words slowly found their way into English speech.

Meanwhile, English lost its literary position in the troublesome eleventh century. Learning decayed, schools were dying, books were seldom written. The *Chronicle* was continued at several places, but only one manuscript extends much beyond the Norman conquest. This *Peterborough Chronicle* is also one of the few English works of the later eleventh century. Under such circumstances English speech changed more rapidly and became more simple in form. Inflections were reduced in number, and irregular forms gave place to the more regular. This was especially true of Anglian English, which was to gain new importance in the new period.

To summarize the Old English period, Teutonic dialects were brought to Britain at different times by the Jutes, Saxons, and Angles. Two of these dialects, the Anglian and the Saxon, successively rose to the dignity of a literary language. Each came in contact with Celtic, and with Latin

as a learned language. Anglian was also especially affected by Danish, and Saxon English by Norman French. English thus began to acquire foreign words. It also progressed somewhat toward a simplification and regularization of the inflectional system.

CHAPTER II

MIDDLE ENGLISH

THE conquest by the Normans had no such effect on the language as the conquest by the Teutons. The Teutons brought a language which replaced that of the conquered. The new conquerors spoke Norman French for a time, but gradually adopted English, as the Danes had done before them.

This was in accord with the policy of William the Conqueror. He disturbed existing conditions as little as possible. He claimed the throne on a promise of Edward the Confessor. He presented himself for election before the national assembly (Witanagemot). He took the coronation oath of English kings. He continued to use English and Latin in official documents. It is believed that he tried to learn the spoken language. He never used French in official documents, so far as preserved, and he made no attempt to displace the mother tongue.

Yet there was some change in the status of English. It was no longer the language of literature and of national life. This was inevitable for a time. The higher positions in church and state were largely in the hands of foreigners. To them English was not a natural medium of expression, even if known. Besides, no one form of the language was now on much better footing than another. Under these circumstances literature was nearly at a standstill.

The twelfth century is therefore known for little native literature. Some few examples are a Kentish copy of the *Gospels* and certain *Homilies* from Old English originals. A prose *Benedictine Rule* was also written in the south. To the same region belong the rimed *Distichs of Cato* and the *Moral Ode*. The most notable original work was the *Peterborough Chronicle*, continued in this century to 1154. It belongs to the Midland part of the Anglian district, and its vigor gives some prophecy of the coming importance of Midland English.

The first literary effect of the Norman conquest was a larger use of Latin. Latin also largely displaced English in official use during the reign

of Richard I (1189–1199). The Latin literature was theological, as the treatises of Lanfranc (d. 1089), Anselm (d. 1109), and John of Salisbury (d. 1180). Mathematical treatises were also written, as by Gerland (d. 1150), Athelard of Bath (twelfth century), and Roger Infans (d. 1124). Other more general works are Neckham's *De Naturis Rerum*, Alfred of England's *Æsop*, Map's Latin *Poems*, and Wireker's *Brunellus*.

The most important Latin literature was historical. It included numerous writers from various parts of England. There were Thomas of Ely (d. 1175), Florence of Worcester (d. 1118), Simeon of Durham (d. 1130), William of Malmesbury (d. 1143), Henry of Huntingdon (d. 1155), Geoffrey of Monmouth (d. 1154), Giraldus of Wales (d. 1220). These are all important for the history of mediæval England.

The more direct influence of the Norman occupation was a Norman French literature written in England. There Philip de Thaun wrote his *Bestiaire* (about 1122), a poem on animals and their characteristics. The Norman French literature was also historical. Gaimar wrote a *History of the English* (1147); Wace wrote *Brutus of Eng-*

land (1155) and the *Story of Rollo the Norman*
(1170); Benoit de St. Maure, the *Story of Troy*
(about 1184) and the *Story of Normandy*. There
were numerous romances also. Some of the more
important are Map's *Quest of the Grail* and *Lance-
lot of the Lake*. The *Tristan* story was told by
more than one poet. All these were to influence
later English literature.

Meanwhile, English continued to be the lan-
guage of the people. Before Norman French could
have affected it, and in parts of England least
subject to such influence, it had become greatly
simplified. Its inflections were fewer. Its syntax
came to be more and more like Modern English.
As in Old English, these changes were most rapid
in the north and least so in the south. The lan-
guage of the Midlands stood between, though
inclining to the more rapid changes of the north.
The only certain effect of French at this time was
on the vocabulary. French words were gradually
introduced, as will be shown in later chapters.

The dialects of Middle English are known by
somewhat new names. The older Saxon, with
Kentish, made up Southern English. The older
Northumbrian is now called Northern. During

this period also Northern English, as spoken in Scotland, developed into a new literary language, called Lowland Scotch. The older Mercian now became Midland English, and is distinguished as East and West Midland. The former was to assume new official and literary relations. London was now the capital of England, and London English gradually became more and more East Midland in character.

The advance of English toward a national language was steady, as English and Normans became one people. This fusion occurred earlier than is often supposed. In 1088 William's sons held their new possessions by appealing to the loyalty of their English subjects. Such loyalty depended on the growing union of the races and the disappearance of race hatred. Walter Map tells us that Henry I (1100–1135) "united the two peoples in firm accord." Another writer says that in the reign of Henry II (1154–1189) it was scarcely possible to distinguish freemen of Norman and English birth. A little later a bishop of Norman birth blamed another Norman bishop because he could not understand English. In the thirteenth century the bishop of York refused positions

in the church to those who could not speak the language of the people.

By the end of the twelfth century English had doubtless become the spoken language of all of foreign parentage. That is, it was the language of all the people of England. In addition, the learned knew Latin, and no doubt often spoke French as well. As to the Midland dialect, the rise of the universities belongs to the later twelfth and early thirteenth centuries. Both Oxford and Cambridge were in the Midland district. The universities, therefore, doubtless had a significant influence in strengthening the use of Midland among the learned classes.

The fusion of English and Normans was hastened by political changes. In 1154 Henry of Anjou became Henry II of England. By this change the former Norman rule gave place, for more than half a century, to Angevin kingship. Even Normandy itself was lost to the empire in 1204. The coming of the Angevins acquainted Englishmen with another French dialect. It brought also a knowledge of a larger French literature. To this was soon added the influence of Parisian French. With this Parisian French Englishmen

became acquainted at the University of Paris, where they were taught by such great teachers as Abelard. This French of Paris, the capital, soon came to hold a position similar to that of London English. It was regarded as the standard form.

From the beginning of the thirteenth century a new native literature arose in England. Latin was still written, and French occasionally. But the significant works of more original character were in English. In the southwest the priest Layamon wrote his *Brut,* based on Wace (see p. 26), but with much matter from native sources. The form of the poem is also English. Its line is based on the Old English alliterative line, though with occasional rime. To the south also belong the prose *Ancren Riwle,* or *Rule of Nuns,* the *Lives of Saints,* and other religious pieces. There, too, were composed the charming *Owl and Nightingale,* and the poetical romances *Alisaunder, Arthur and Merlin, Richard the Lion-hearted.*

The Midland region also had its literature. First is the *Ormulum,* a long series of verse homilies written expressly for Englishmen. The *Genesis and Exodus* is a verse paraphrase of parts of those Scripture books. The *Bestiary* is an account

of animals, with an interpretation of their real or supposed characteristics. The *Debate of the Body and the Soul* is a spirited dialogue, which is conceived as taking place just as the soul leaves its earthly habitation. To these may be added the romance of *Floris and Blauncheflur,* an interesting love story.

Toward the last of the twelfth century literature began to appear in the Northern dialect. Here were written a series of *Saints' Lives* in verse. As some of these are from French originals they show that French influence had penetrated to the extreme north. Yet the language and structure are mainly descendants of the older English speech of Northumbria.

In the thirteenth century English partly regained its position as an official language. As noted before, Latin had largely displaced English in official documents in the time of Richard I. French was first used in such documents in 1215, the year of Magna Charta. At that time, too, it was employed by Stephen Langton, the champion of church and English freedom against the tyranny of John. Just when French became the language of the courts is not known. In both cases its use may

have been due to the use of French, besides Latin, at the universities.

In any case English now appeared in one significant document. When the Provisions of Oxford were wrested from the unwilling Henry III in 1258, they were proclaimed to every shire in English, as well as in French and Latin. This use of English may have been a concession to the popular uprising which had gained the Oxford bill of rights. Besides, English seems to have been used familiarly at the court of the first Edward (1274–1307). Again, this same Edward sought to inspire loyalty by appealing to the love of the mother tongue. In a summons to parliament he said that the French king " planned, if his ability should correspond with his iniquitous purpose (which God prevent), to destroy the English language wholly from the earth."

The fourteenth century witnessed the complete ascendency of English in public life. Even the use of French by the upper classes now began to seem strange. Robert of Gloucester remarks on England's peculiar position in this respect. Recounting the story of the Conquest, and the continued use of French, he says, —

"I ween there is no country in all the world
  That does not hold to its own speech, except England only."

He implies also that learning French is partly an affectation, "For but a man knows French, men speak little of him." Yet, as if English were already used by all, he adds good-humoredly,—

"But well men know for to know both is well,
  For the more that a man knows the more worth he is."

English also gained a new place in the schools. The practice had been to use French as the school language. So Higden tells us in his *Polychronicon* of 1352. But even before Higden had completed his work the change had begun. Trevisa, his English translator, adds this note:—

"This manner [of teaching in French] was much used before the first death [*i.e.* the plague of 1349], and is since somedeal changed. For John Cornwall, a master of grammar, changed the lore [*i.e.* teaching] in grammar-schools and construction of French into English, and Richard Pencrich learned this manner of teaching of him, and other men of Pencrich; so that now, the year of our Lord a thousand three hundred four score and five, and of the second king Richard after the Conquest nine, in all the grammar-schools of England, children leaveth French and construeth and learneth in English. . . . Also gentlemen have now much left for to teach their children French."

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This testimony is the more significant, for Trevisa shows himself no bigot.   Like Robert of Gloucester, he thought knowledge of a second language a good thing.   He notes that there was a certain disadvantage in not knowing French, " and [*i.e.* if] they shall pass the sea, and travel in strange lands and in many other places."

In the same period English came to be the language of official life.   In 1362 Edward III first opened Parliament with an English speech.   In the same year he ordered that pleadings in the law courts should be in the native tongue.   English was first used in petitions to Parliament in 1386. The earliest English will preserved in London belongs to the next year.   One year later the earliest statutes of the guilds were sent to London in the mother tongue.   French had begun to be used in correspondence in 1270.   A private letter of 1399 shows that it had given way to English.   In the same year Henry IV accepted the crown in an English speech.   Thus the native language triumphed, not only over Norman French, but over the traditional and conventional use of French as the language of half the courts of Europe.

There was now, also, the first clear recognition

of different dialects of English speech. This represents a new consciousness with regard to language. Bede had classed English as simply one of the five languages of Britain, the others being British, Scottish, Pictish, and Latin. An Old or Middle English writer used the dialect of his own region, with no thought of whether it would be understood by other Englishmen. In like manner a copyist usually used his own dialect, no matter what that of the original. No one thought of one dialect as more correct or important than another.

A distinct advance in linguistic consciousness appears in Higden. He recognized three great divisions of English, as "Southern, Northern, and Middle speech in the middle of the land." He adds : —

"Men of the east with men of the west, as it were under the same part of heaven, accord more in sounding of speech than men of the north with men of the south. Therefore it is that Mercians, that are men of Middle England, as it were partners of the ends, understand better the side languages Northern and Southern, than Northern and Southern understand either [the] other."

This, too, is the earliest recognition of Midland English as the form that was to become national.

Yet as early as this there was no idea of one

dialect or form of speech becoming a standard for the whole nation. A conscious choice would have been neither natural nor effective. But by unconscious process the language of the Midland district gradually approached national use in literature. National life centered in London, national learning in the universities, both in the Midlands. The dialect of London gradually became Midland in character. In this dialect a great literature sprang up, establishing a form for literary art which was constantly followed by other writers. A literary language thus came to be national in character.

This does not mean that the different dialects ceased to be written. Far less must it be supposed that they ceased to be spoken, even by people of considerable learning. The idea of correct spoken English was not to develop until centuries after this time. But from this time one literary form of English prevails, and that form was the variety called Midland.

The fourteenth century is the blossoming time of a new and original literature. To Southern belong numerous important works. Robert of Gloucester's *Chronicle* has been mentioned. Two

other interesting works are the *Legend of the Holy Rood* (or *Cross*), and the *Seven Sages*, a collection of tales. Here also Thomas Chester wrote the romances *Octavian, Libæus Desconus*, and the story of *Launfal*. These are all metrical. The most important prose works are Trevisa's translation of Higden's *Polychronicon*, and the Kentish *Ayenbite of Inwit*, or *Remorse of Conscience* by Dan Michael. To Kentish also belong Shoreham's *Poems*.

Northern is not behind in number of writings. There is the *Cursor Mundi*, a verse history of the world; the *Surtees Psalter*, and the religious writings of Richard Rolle. Castleford's *Chronicle* and the *Metrical Homilies* indicate their character by their titles. Minot's *Poems* are national lyrics of great excellence. The romances are even more numerous, as *Tristrem, Isumbras, Florence of Rome, Horn Childe, Eglamour, Octavian, Iwain and Gawain*. Yet some of these show a mixture of Midland forms and may possibly belong south of the Northern line.

By far the greatest literature belongs to the Midland district. Here also the romances were numerous. Some of the best are *Havelok, Amis and Amiloun, Emare, Earl of Toulouse, Guy of*

Warwick. Robert Manning translated two French works, the *Handlinge Sinne*, or *Manual of Sins*, and Langtoft's *Chronicle.* Bokenham wrote a series of *Legends of Saints*, Myrc some *Instructions to Parish Priests*, and Audelay other *Poems*, the last two in the West Midland region. Of the latter district the most important poet is the author of *Pearl, Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, Cleanness* (*i.e.* Chastity), and *Patience.* The first two show unusual power and beauty.

To the Midland district also belong the five great names of this century. These are Chaucer, incomparable master of literary art; Gower, his friend, who wrote the *Confessio Amantis;* Langland, of the *Piers Plowman*, among poets. To these we may add Wyclif, the reformer, and the author of Mandeville's *Travels* among prose writers. All these were original in a new sense. With them, too, a national literature became fully established.

The extent to which English was becoming national may be seen from the circumstances of Chaucer's career. A poet of the highest ability, he was especially connected with the court. A man of affairs, he was honored by the king with highly

important offices. Though he wrote French in his youth, all his work now preserved to us is in English. He made no conscious choice of one dialect of English, for he used the language of his native city, London. Yet the greatness of his work established a higher conception of poetic art. For this reason he was copied and imitated in the following century, sometimes even later. From his time, therefore, a language of literary art came to be recognized, with literary traditions separating it somewhat from the language of prose or ordinary speech.

The victory of English as a national language is proved by the disuse of French in works written in England. In Yorkshire Peter Langtoft composed his French *Chronicle* in 1307. About the same time Nichole Bozon wrote his *Moral Tales*. The last considerable French works were Gower's *Mirour de l'omne*, of 1378, and his *Ballads*, perhaps somewhat later. In general, however, from the middle of the fourteenth century, as Ten Brink says, French only "prolonged a partly artificial and partly starved vitality." [1]

The establishment of Midland English as the

[1] *Early English Literature*, p. 327.

national language is clearer, perhaps, from the literature of the fifteenth century. In this time Southern English no longer held a place in writing. Northern continued to be used only as a Scottish literary language, of which we shall take account in another place. On the other hand, the literary traditions of Chaucer were carried on by Occleve (d. 1450) and Lydgate (d. 1451). The controversy between Wyclif and his opponents led to the use of the language of the people in controversial prose. Capgrave wrote the first *Chronicle* in English, after that at Peterborough had ended in 1154. Fortescue composed *Absolute and Limited Monarchy*, the earliest treatise on constitutional government.

Toward the last of the Middle period the use of Midland English was greatly extended by the establishment of printing in England. William Caxton brought the newly invented art to London about 1470. He himself translated many books. He printed these and many others, among them numerous older works. Printing gave a powerful impulse to the spread of books among the people. By it Midland gained the advantage of an established form, easily read by all Englishmen, and

its influence was thus much wider than the district to which it originally belonged.

While Midland was becoming a national language for England, a division of Northern was assuming a like character for Scotland. This may be dated from 1375, when Barbour wrote his *Bruce*, the national epic of Scotland. This was followed by Wyntoun's verse *Chronicle*, about 1420, and by the *King's Quhair* (quire or book) of the Scotch king, James I. Scottish literature of the fifteenth century includes the names of Blind Harry and of Henryson, whose *Testament of Cresseid* was once thought to be Chaucer's.

From this time Scotland has a literature of its own, side by side with the greater development in England. Literary Scotch is based upon that spoken in Edinburgh, as literary English is based upon that of London. Scotch, however, contains larger Norse and Celtic elements than literary English. This is owing to its more Northern character. Close union with France, when England and France were at war, had also its special influence on Scotch. Otherwise, Scotch is merely Northern English of the Lowland district.

To summarize, the story of Middle English is

the story of its victory over French as a spoken and written language. That language had been brought in by the Normans, and continued among the upper classes by the Angevin rule. But Engglish, though receiving large numbers of French words, retained its Teutonic structure and finally gained complete ascendency. At the same time Norse influence made special additions to the word stock. During the period the process of simplification continued active. As a result, the uninflected and analytic character of the modern tongue was practically reached. During the period, also, Midland English of the southeast Midland region became the language of literature and of national life. Side by side with it, literary Scotch developed from the extreme Northern of Edinburgh.

CHAPTER III

THE MODERN LANGUAGE

THE story of the modern language is, in one sense, quite simple. No conquest of England has occurred, as in both periods preceding. Midland English has remained the national language, subject to slight changes. Yet Modern English has a history by no means unimportant. Certain subtler influences must be chronicled, and certain new phases of development. For some of the same processes of simplification have been in progress, as in English of the past, though bringing about less radical changes in structure.

We have already mentioned a growing consciousness with regard to language. That consciousness became more pronounced in the modern period. Caxton shows it in his preface to the *Eneydos*. He there mentions two kinds of criticism of his work. He speaks of " some gentlemen which late blamed me, saying that in my transla-

tions I had overcurious terms, which could not be understood of common people " ; and later, " some honest and great clerks have been with me and desired me to write the most curious terms that I could find."

This would indicate that Englishmen were already of two classes in reference to their native tongue. Some were for the common and homely, some for the new and strange. Something of the same sort appears later in the criticism of Sir Thomas Elyot's *Governour* (1531) for its " strange terms." These are at least evidence of a new feeling toward language. They show a consciousness regarding usage hitherto unknown. Let us see what this new attitude brought forth.

All classes of critics wished to " improve " English, as they said. Each, however, had its own way of reaching the end. One class proposed to bring about the result by large importations of words from Latin, Greek, and the Romance languages. Elyot, in the preface to *Knowledge which maketh a Man Wise* (1533), admits a definite purpose to use new words : —

" I intended," he says, " to augment our English tongue, whereby men should express more abundantly the thing

that they conceived in their hearts (wherefore language was ordained), having words apt for the purpose, as also interpret out of Greek, Latin, or any other tongue into English as sufficiently as out of any of the said tongues into another."

Elyot also speaks of "other words late come out of Italy and France, and made denizens among us." In 1581 George Pettie approved borrowing from Latin in these words: "It is indeed the ready way to enrich our tongue and make it copious; and it is the way all tongues have taken to enrich themselves." A little more than a decade later Nash, the pamphleteer, defended his borrowings from several foreign languages on the ground that English contained too many monosyllables.

A second class of critics regarded the fashion of borrowing words as a corruption of speech. Thus Roger Ascham, in his *Toxophilus* (1544), would have men write as the common people speak. In support of this he quotes the counsel of Aristotle. He adds, "Many English writers have not done so, but using strange words, as Latin, French, and Italian, do make all things dark and hard." Thomas Wilson, in his *Arte of Rhetoric* (1533), was even more severe upon the

use of foreign words.   He puts his excellent
doctrine thus simply : —

> "Among all other lessons this should first be learned,
> that we never affect any inkhorn terms, but to speak as is
> commonly received. . . .   Some seek so far for outlandish
> English that they forget altogether their mother's language."

Many others took the same view.   Gascoigne's
*Notes of Instruction concerning the Making of Eng-
lish Verse* (1575) advises against the use of words
of many syllables.   His reason is, " the more mono-
syllables you use, the truer Englishman you shall
seem, and the less you shall smell of Italian."   In
his epistle at the beginning of the *Shepherd's Cal-
endar* (1579), E. K. supports the same practice of
Spenser.   He praises the poet for restoring, " as
to their rightful heritage, such good and natural
English words as have been long time out of use,
and almost clean disherited."

Spenser sometimes went too far in conservative
tendency.   In the *Shepherd's Calendar* he used
too many words that were clearly dialectal.   In
the *Faerie Queene* he borrowed too freely from
English of the past.   He did both, however, in
opposition to the extreme borrowing from foreign
sources that was common.   The author of the

Arte of English Poesie (1589) was also an opponent of borrowed plumes : —

"Albeit, peradventure some small admonition be not impertinent, for we find in our English writers many words and speeches amenable; and ye shall see in some many ink-horn terms so ill-affected, brought in by men of learning, as preachers and schoolmasters, and many strange terms of other languages by secretaries and merchants and travelers, and many dark words and not usual nor well sounding, though they be daily spoken at court."

Yet each class of critics had its share in the development of English. The adoption of foreign and newly coined words, when carried to extreme, was checked by the more conservative class. The latter also strengthened the native elements of vocabulary and syntax. A middle ground between the two was finally taken in practice. One of those who aptly stated the theory of this middle ground was Sir Philip Sidney. In his *Defence of Poesie* (1581) he notes the diverse views of writers and critics, and then says of English: "I know some will say it is a mingled language; and why not so much the better, taking the best of both the other."

In connection with the unusual borrowing of words which was taking place, we must remem-

ber the multitude of new influences on English letters and life. Indeed, it was because of these new influences that words, as ideas, were adopted into books and speech. It was the century of the revival of learning. With this came new teaching of the classical languages in the schools and more frequent translation of classical books. It was the time of more extended intercourse with Italy. With this came a new reading of Italian literature and abundant translation from it. It was the period of first acquaintance with the literatures of Germany and the Low Countries, and more largely with that of Spain. It was a time of renewed and strengthened intercourse with the literature of France. Through this not only was French literature more intimately known, but many books of other Romance nations were first translated into English.

It was the century of the Reformation of the English church. Owing to this English preaching became a new factor in literature, and the English Bible a book of style as of morals. It was the century of great maritime projects and the opening of new worlds. Men's minds were broadened anew by acquaintance with regions hitherto

unknown, and their imaginations fired with the possibility of new discoveries. The literature of England, so plenteous and well known as to need no chronicling, is full of these new influences. It is not strange that this broader acquaintance with ancient and modern tongues, this new life of Englishmen, should have made the language broader and richer than at any time in the past.

By the side of the critics other influences had a share in regularizing English usage. Wilson's *Arte of Rhetoric* has been mentioned. In 1524 Cox had issued a work with the same title. Thus text-books of rhetoric began to affect the usage of the schools. Treatises on verse also emphasized choice and use of words. All these influences tended toward uniformity and regularity.

The extent to which the new thought regarding language was carried may be seen from some books of a different character. Reform in spelling was proposed in a Latin dialogue (1568) by Thomas Smith. It was also the subject of John Hart's *Orthographie* (1569), and Bullokar's *Amendment of Orthographie* (1580). Other works more directly connected with usage, as grammars

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and dictionaries, belong to the same time. In 1582 Mulcaster published his *Elementarie,* which supported the use of English instead of Latin, proposed a complete English dictionary, and promised a grammar of the language. The latter he did not write, but Bullokar's *Brief Grammar for English* appeared in 1586. All these are evidences of conscious effort to improve the language and make it a better medium of expression.

Meanwhile the literature of England shows the extent to which the language had become standard for the whole country. So long as different dialects were represented by important works, a grammar of the language must have been one of a particular dialect, or of all of them together. In this period, for the first time, could be prepared a grammar of standard English, rather than of Midland or Southern or Northern English. For the first time, all usage other than that of the great writers was of small account. A dictionary of standard usage could also be made. All these things indicated the new unity of national use.

ENGLISH OF THE SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES

In this period the linguistic consciousness emphasized a new feature of English. This was a supposed instability of the standard language already in existence. It was seen that English had changed somewhat, even in the modern period. As compared with Chaucer, the changes were still greater. They seemed great, also, when compared with classical Latin. Even Caxton was surprised at the difference between the language of Chaucer and that of his own age. In the preface to his *Eneydos* he exclaims, "We Englishmen be born under the domination of the moon, which is never steadfast but ever wavering." Impressed by the same fact, Lord Bacon set himself to translate his works into Latin. He said, "These modern languages will, at one time or other, play the bankrupts with books." [1]

The same idea in other countries had led to various means for preventing change. In Italy academies were established. One of these, the Academia della Crusca, had published a great dic-

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[1] Preface to the *Essays*, 1623.

tionary of Italian in 1613. In England similar
plans were suggested. The earliest recorded is
that of Edmund Bolton in 1616. He proposed a
plan for a Royal Academy, one part of which was
to be devoted to literature. The scheme is said to
have been confirmed by James I in 1624, but was
never carried out, owing to his death the following
year.

The proposal to found an academy was fre-
quently made in the next hundred years. Milton
may have had it in mind. At least he wrote in
the highest terms of " him who endeavors, by
precept and by rules, to perpetuate that style and
idiom of speech and composition which have flour-
ished in the purest periods of the language." In
1663 Dryden regretted " that, speaking so noble a
language as we do, we have not a more certain
measure of it, as they have in France, where they
have an academy enacted for that purpose." In
1679, too, he wished that there might be in
England " the same certainty of words and purity
of phrase to which the Italians first arrived, and
after them the French."

In the eighteenth century Swift and Addison
both favored some such plan. Addison urged

"something like an academy that, by the best authorities and rules drawn from the analogy of languages, shall settle all controversies between grammar and idiom " (*Spectator*, 1711). The following year Swift wrote a pamphlet in support of his idea. It bore the title, *Proposal for Correcting, Improving, and Ascertaining the English Tongue.*

The desire for an academy was partly owing to a new borrowing of French words. This had resulted from a strong French influence at the Restoration (1660). Dryden had not been slow to use such words. Yet he thus severely criticised extreme borrowing: "I cannot approve of their way of refining, who corrupt our English idiom by mixing it too much with French. That is a sophistication of language, not an improvement of it; a turning English into French rather than refining English by French." In the same spirit Butler wrote a *Satire on our Ridiculous Imitation of the French.* The *Spectator* even wished to "prohibit any French phrases from becoming current in this kingdom, when those of our own stamp are altogether as valuable."

The wish for an academy came from the conservatives in language. To such influences must

be added the makers of grammars and dictionaries. In 1633 Charles Butler published his *English Grammar*. In 1640 that left in manuscript by Ben Jonson was first printed. The making of dictionaries also entered on a new stage. Those of the sixteenth century had explained another language by English, not English itself. In 1616 a true English dictionary was made by John Bullokar. It was called an *English Expositor*, and in it the "hardest words" were interpreted. In 1623 Cockeram printed an *English Dictionarie*, and in 1656 Blount published a *Glossographia*. In 1658 Phillips, nephew of Milton, issued his *New World of Words*, a nearer approach to the dictionary of to-day.

All these works were devoted to the unusual and the difficult words of the language. There was no attempt to give common terms, or include all those belonging to English. Still the dictionary and grammar had a regularizing and unifying influence. Literary usage, also, had made considerable advance upon that of the Elizabethan age. There was more attention to every phase of diction. This was also owing to the growth of the critical faculty.

The desire for what was called fixity in language continued into the eighteenth century. A new sense for correctness in usage also developed. This is clear from numerous essays on points of diction in the *Spectator* and similar periodicals. An advance in dictionaries was made by Bailey. He published an *Etymological Dictionary* in 1721 (second volume, 1727), which was much more complete as to common words than any preceding. Grammars and "Guides" to the English tongue show that English was taught in the schools as never before. Yet there was still no authoritative guide to good English, such as all could accept.

This lack the great literary critic, Samuel Johnson, undertook to supply. In 1747 he published a Plan for a new dictionary, by which he hoped "to fix (*i.e.* establish) the English language." The *Dictionary* was printed in 1755 and, while not all that Johnson hoped for, was of great value in regulating usage. It was prepared by one of recognized reputation. It gave the best usage from the Elizabethan age to that of its appearance. It used illustrative quotations for the first time. It first added grammatical relations of words, and paid special attention to careful definitions. It

gave frequent suggestions of proper forms, and it was preceded by a grammar of the language. On these accounts the new dictionary was accepted as a standard in a new sense and by all English-speaking people.

Johnson's *Dictionary* became the standard for spelling as well as literary usage. Questions of orthography had been considered in the sixteenth century. The works of Sir Thomas Smith, a privy councilor, and of Bullokar have been mentioned. Thus early the spelling of English was felt to be strangely at variance with pronunciation. Thus early there was a desire for something more rational. The interest of the eighteenth century, however, centered in a fixed standard, rather than in reform of spelling. Lord Chesterfield pointed out that there were two methods of spelling, the gentlemanly and the pedantic, and hoped the new dictionary would establish a single form. This Johnson did supply, and he was generally followed. Though there have been some changes since his time, they have been simplifications on the basis of his forms, rather than radical modifications.

To the influence of the dictionary must be

added a new interest in rhetoric as a subject of study. In 1759 Blair began his *Lectures* on the subject at Edinburgh. In 1776 Campbell published his *Principles of Rhetoric*, discussing questions of usage more fully than had been done in any previous work. From this time there was a continuous stream of books on similar subjects. These were helpful in emphasizing and completing the work of grammarians and makers of dictionaries.

Interest in fixity of language led to attempts at a uniform pronunciation of English. Early observers noticed differences in speech, but uniformity in pronunciation was scarcely thought of. Early dictionaries gave little or no attention to the subject. Not until the eighteenth century was accent marked in any dictionary. Then it was not in his first edition that Bailey added this important element. It is true that pronunciation was considered in some other works, but in no authoritative way.

Johnson followed Bailey in marking accent only. He made no attempt to indicate vowel sounds. Almost at once, however, the discussion of a standard pronunciation began. An ineffective work on the subject was published in 1759. In 1773 Kenrick marked vowel sounds in his *Dictionary*,

and in this was followed by the dictionaries of Perry (1775), Sheridan (1780), and Walker (1791), the most important of all. From this time pronunciation has been a part of all such works. They have thus encouraged uniformity, and restrained variation among educated people.

Toward the last of the eighteenth century there was a reaction against the more ornate and Latinized diction of the earlier time. The result was a new simplicity in words, and to some extent in sentence structure. The literary language thus gained in directness, while losing nothing in strength or beauty. A minor influence is less to be commended. It was the too frequent introduction of archaic words into literature. This archaic tendency was due to the revival of older poetry, as the ballads, Spenser, and the Elizabethan drama. Compare, for example, Coleridge's *Ancient Mariner*, especially the first published form. Such archaisms, however, have in general held but a temporary place, even in literary usage.

ENGLISH IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

During the nineteenth century English has been more uniform than in any preceding period.

For example, the forms of the strong or irregular verb have been the last to be established. Yet these have become practically invariable in this period. In the eighteenth century Gray used *had wrote* in his *Letters,* and Johnson gave the past participle as *written, writ,* or *wrote.* All but the first have come to be distinctly illiterate. So, while Johnson himself gave *run* as past tense of *run* in his grammar, and used it himself in his writings, he gave *ran* in the dictionary proper and this form alone has prevailed. The spoken language also has been more uniform among educated people than in any preceding century.

Uniformity of literary English is due to many influences. First is the established form of the literary language. Again, there are the conservative influences of schools, grammarians, rhetoricians, the dictionaries. Such influences do not prevent all change, but they hinder changes that would otherwise occur more frequently.

On the other hand, the fondness for archaic diction continued to some extent in the early nineteenth century. Compare the first canto of Byron's *Childe Harold,* the *Poems* of Keats, and occasional archaisms in Tennyson and Browning. In gen-

eral, however, this tendency has not affected prose
or speech itself.   Akin to this fondness for archa-
isms is a new use of dialect in literature.   Some-
thing of this sort has been known for centuries.
Chaucer used dialect in the *Reeve's Tale,* Shake-
speare for several characters, Fielding in *Tom
Jones.*   In the nineteenth century the peculiarities
and quaint suggestiveness of folk-speech have been
much more widely employed.   Dialect has been
made a part of fiction, drama, even poetry, to an
extent never before known.   Yet dialect in litera-
ture has naturally not affected speech itself.

LOWLAND SCOTCH

During Middle English, as we have seen, Low-
land Scotch became the literary language of the
Scotch people.   We must thus consider English
beyond the bounds of England proper.   Scotch
continued to flourish during the sixteenth century.
At its beginning printing was established at Edin-
burgh, and seven of Dunbar's poems were issued
in 1608.   Scottish literature continued in the po-
etry of Gawain Douglas (d. 1522), David Lindsay
(d. 1555), James VI, afterward James I of Eng-
land, and others of less note.

The revival of learning and the Reformation affected Scotland as they did England. During the sixteenth century Scotch literature was greatly influenced by that of England. With the union of the crowns in 1603 Scotch declined as a literary language. Thereafter Scotch writers used standard English and took their place with English authors. The earliest to adopt the literary language of England was Drummond of Hawthorndon (d. 1649). The further union of the kingdoms in 1707 strengthened the position of literary English among the Scotch.

The intense nationality of the Scotch again asserted itself in the eighteenth century. Scottish literature was again revived. The revival began with the collection of the older poetry of the Scotch people by Watson. Ramsay, also a collector, wrote the first notable work in the Scotch dialect, the *Gentle Shepherd*, of 1725. He was followed by Robert Fergusson (1750–1774), who published *Poems* a year before his death. The Scotch revival culminated in the work of Robert Burns, the greatest poet of Scotland. Yet even Burns did not always use pure Scotch. He sometimes wrote literary English, and often a mixture of Scotch

and English. Burns, too, has had no worthy successor, though dialect Scotch is still often written, especially in fiction.

ENGLISH IN IRELAND

Owing to conquest and gradual settlement of Ireland by Englishmen, English became the standard language of that island. Irish, a Celtic language, was thus reduced to a peasant dialect. As early as the eighteenth century literary men, born and brought up in Ireland, adopted standard English in their writings. They are therefore classed with English writers, as in the case of so many Scotchmen. It is only necessary to mention such names as those of Swift, Goldsmith, Burke, Sheridan, and Moore. From the last of the eighteenth century, also, educated Irishmen have conformed their pronunciation to that of England. Irish English of dialect fiction is based upon the language of the illiterate. This represents a less rapid development of that form of English introduced at the Cromwellian conquest.

American English

Historically, American English is based upon the language of the time of colonization, or that of the seventeenth century. This foundation of seventeenth-century English has been variously affected. The vocabulary has been increased by some common words from the language of the American Indians. From the same source a much larger number of place-names has also been received. Again, contact with the French and Spanish colonies has brought in some words. Otherwise, the standards of England were accepted in America during the colonial period.

With the separation from Great Britain came some new influences. The language of government and law became different in many particulars. Some words and idioms that had grown obsolete in England continued to be used in America. For example, many seventeenth-century expressions are well known here, though no longer found in the mother country. There soon grew up, too, a sentiment in favor of an American standard.

Emphasis of an American standard is especially connected with the name of Noah Webster.

In 1789 he printed his *Dissertations on the English Language*, and dedicated them to Franklin. In them he proposed an American standard in these words: " As an independent nation, our honor requires us to have a system of our own in language as well as in government." Webster's idea of an American standard included a modified spelling, an American pronunciation, and such usage in words and idioms as was fully established. He expressed his views further in a series of dictionaries, from that of 1806 to an *American Dictionary* in 1828. In these Webster proposed to do for American English what Johnson had tried to do for the language of England.

Webster's views regarding an American standard were not adopted by all. When answering Webster's letter of dedication, Franklin called attention to certain " innovations " in American usage which he hoped would be corrected. It would seem that he had not wholly agreed with Webster's patriotic proposal. Others, at any rate, wished to emphasize the essential unity of English in the two countries. Pickering, the first collector of *Americanisms* (1816), noted what he called the " corruptions " in order to preserve the purity of

American English. Worcester, who began a series of dictionaries in 1830, opposed the views of Webster and conformed very largely to British standards.

By the last of the nineteenth century each of these views had influenced the other. Extremes in both directions had been largely given up. The standards of later editions of Webster and Worcester, as of other American dictionaries, do not materially differ. The best American dictionaries are also used to a considerable extent in England. The tendency has thus been toward substantial agreement in the literary language of the two countries.

In two respects, not yet mentioned, British and American English differ more or less. One is orthography. Webster broke away from Johnson and Walker in the spelling of certain classes of words. For these he proposed and used a simpler spelling, and this modified orthography has generally prevailed in America. The rapid spread of this reform was doubtless largely due to the adoption of Webster's *Spelling Book* in American schools.

A second difference from British English is

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in pronunciation.   Webster's insistence on an American standard has been somewhat modified, but no American dictionary fully adopts British usage.   The spoken language, therefore, differs from British English more than the written. Doubtless this will always be so, owing to the wide separation of the two countries.   Within this country, however, the spoken language is more uniform among all classes than in Great Britain.   This is owing to popular education, to travel, and to easy migration from one part of the country to another.   Yet the beginnings of what may be considerable differences in speech can be found.   The illiterate of New England, the upper Mississippi Valley, and the South speak somewhat marked dialects.

The Spread of English

One of the facts not yet fully emphasized is the spread of English in all parts of the world.   At the time of Elizabeth English was spoken by five millions of people.   It is to-day the language of far more than a hundred millions in various countries.   This widespread use has resulted from the growth of the British Empire

in America, India, Australia, South Africa, and from the no less significant development of the American nation. Besides, English has spread to many foreign countries as the language of trade. Finally, the literature of England is read by many who do not speak the language.

Such widespread use may have great moment in the future. In his *Autobiography* Franklin expressed the opinion that English might sometime be second only to French in general use. The opinion of Franklin has been more than realized. English is now spoken by more people than have ever before used a single homogeneous speech. The conclusion is not far fetched that it may sometime become something like a universal tongue.

To sum up briefly, the modern period has witnessed fewer external changes than ever before. There has been development from within toward simplicity and regularity. This has been owing to a growing consciousness regarding language and numerous efforts to regulate it in many ways. It is a period of grammars, dictionaries, books on the use of English, written and spoken. It is the period of the teaching of the mother tongue in

school and home. Above all, it is the period of
the regularizing and restraining influence of a
great literature. All these have had undoubted
effect upon the speech. Finally, a notable part of
the language history in the modern period is the
growing use of English throughout the world.
This has followed the growth of the British Em-
pire and the American nation, and, to a less
degree, the extension of trade and travel.

II

CHANGES IN THE FORMS OF WORDS

CHAPTER IV

ENGLISH SPELLING

To understand the history of a language we must understand the changes in the forms of words. For this purpose we must know something of the signs used to represent sounds. We begin then with English spelling. Our Teutonic ancestors brought to Britain an alphabet used among the Teutons of the continent. This was called by them a runic alphabet, and each character a rune. The runes were based upon letters employed by Greeks and Romans. Yet most of them would not be recognized as Greek or Roman to-day. These runes the English somewhat modified in order to represent some new sounds of their language.

The runic letters are still found in some in-

scriptions upon stone or ivory which have been preserved from early times. Some idea of them may be gained from a single name. The poet Cynewulf used the runes for his name in some of his poems, thus indicating their authorship. These runic letters and the modern form of the name may be set side by side, thus: —

ᚻᚱᛣᛗᛈᚢᛁᚠ — CYNEWULF

It will be seen at once that the runic letters are scarcely to be recognized as having any connection with the Roman letters we use. Yet some resemblances can be made out. Turn the **E** on its side, and it is not unlike our letter of that name. Turn the **U** and **L** upside down and the same will be true. The **F** has all the strokes of our letter, but the cross strokes slant upward and are of equal length. **N** has one down stroke and the cross of our letter, but the second down stroke is gone and the cross cuts the down stroke instead of being joined to its top. The runic **Y** looks like a runic **U** with a T-like part within. In fact the **Y** was made from the **U**, as the vowel **y** developed from **u** in speech. This is as far as we can well go in this word, but some other runes are nearly iden-

tical with Roman letters. All the runes differ in using straight lines for curves. This may have been due to the greater ease of cutting on wood or stone.

The introduction of Christianity brought into England the Roman alphabet as written in Ireland. Yet the old runic alphabet left its mark in two letters, **w** and a sign for **th** (Þ). The Roman alphabet was insufficient for the sounds of the language, but quantity was neglected, except as it was sometimes indicated by doubling a vowel or by accent. Otherwise simple vowel sounds were represented by simple characters or the ligature **æ**. For each diphthong two characters were used.

Several consonants served for two or more sounds. Thus **f,** the characters for **th** (*i.e.* Þ and ð), and perhaps **s** served for both **f** and **v, th** as in **thick** and **the, s** and **z**. **N** denoted both **n** in **ink** and in **king,** as to-day. **C** was used for **k** in **cat** and **cot,** though **k** was occasionally employed for the latter. **H** represented our **h** and a sound like **ch** in German **ich**. **G** was used for consonantal **y,** for **g** in **get** and **got,** and for sounds like **ch** and **g** in German **ach, sagen.**

It will thus be seen that Old English could not be written quite phonetically. Yet it was far more nearly phonetic in its spelling than English has ever been since. There were no silent letters. No vowel sound was ever represented by more than one sign, or the same two signs for a diphthong. Eight of the consonants were always phonetic. There were no combinations for simple sounds, as in our **ch**, **ph**, **sh**, **sch**, **th**. Long consonants were usually doubled, though **cg** were used for **gg**. Pronunciation and spelling, therefore, went hand in hand as they have never since done.

The best idea of Old English spelling may be gained from an example. Here is the Lord's Prayer in West Saxon, or Southern English: —

Ure Fæder, þu   þe on heofone eart, si þin nama gehalgod.
Our Father, thou that in heaven art, be thy name hallowed.

Tocume   þin   rice.   Gewurðe ðin willa on heofone
[Let] come thy kingdom. [Let] be thy will in heaven

and on eorþan. Syle us to dæg urne dæghwamlican hlaf.
and on earth. Give us to-day our   daily   loaf.

And forgyf us ure gyltas, swa we forgyfað ælcum   þara
And forgive us our guilts, so we forgive each (of) those

þe   wið   us   agyltað. And   ne læd
that with (*i.e.* against) us (is) guilty.   And (do) not lead

þu us on costnunge, ac alys us from yfele.[1]
thou us into temptation, but loose us from   evil.

The spelling of Old English remained fairly regular for the same dialect throughout the period. Changes in pronunciation were represented by letters already in use. After the Conquest, English spelling was greatly influenced by the use of French and the practice of French scribes. The older Irish forms of the Roman letters were changed to French forms, like those in use at present. Sounds which had become much modified were represented by new combinations. The **sh** sound, for example, was denoted by **sch, ss,** or **sh,** which finally prevailed. Sounds which were alike in French and Middle English took the French sign. Such are **ch** in **church, qu** in **queen, gu** in **guest, guilt.** Sometimes both signs were used, as **ss, ce** for an **s** sound in **toss, face.** So **c** was used for **s** and **k,** as in French. Later **gh** was made to serve for a sound now lost,

[1] Gospel of Luke xi. 2 f. The Irish forms of Old English letters are no longer retained in print, and even the runic **w** has given place to our letter. This leaves only two letters which differ from those used to-day. They are the characters for **th,** the old rune þ and an old crossed **d** (*i.e.* ð).

but still indicated by the spelling, as in **night**, **right**.
In Middle English, also, **wh** came to be written for
Old English **hw**.

Of consonants peculiar to Old English only
the runic sign for **th** (*i.e.* þ) was retained nearly
through the period, though **th** also came into use.
In fact the þ continued to be used in script and
inscriptions into Modern English. In late Middle
English it lost its extended top, and was also
opened above like **y**. The form resembled **y** so
much that it is often incorrectly read as the latter
sound. Compare the well-known lines on Shake-
speare's tomb : —

> Good frend for Jesus sake forbeare
> To digg the dust encloased heare.
> Blesse be yᵉ[1] man yᵗ spares thes stones,
> And curst be he yᵗ moves my bones.

The confusion among vowel sounds in Middle
English was even greater. Such different sounds

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[1] In the inscription t is above the **y**-like character in **yᵉ** and **yᵗ** of
the last two lines. The forms **yᵉ**, **yᵗ** were convenient abbreviations
for **the** and **that**, and were so understood and read. They were never
called " ye " and " yit," as sometimes when read to-day. The reason
for their use was often to economize space, as in the lines three and
four, in which in the inscription itself there would not have been room
for the complete words. In the second line of the inscription **the** is
written out, except that t and h are linked together, the down stroke
of t doing duty for the first down stroke of h.

as those in **they, there,** and in **lo, lord** were not distinguished. The four sounds were indicated by **e** and **o** respectively. The long **u** sound, as in **fool,** was written with English **u** or French **ou.** Short **u** was written **u,** as in **sun,** often **o,** as in **comfort.** I and **y** were used interchangeably for the same sound. The same diphthong was written with English **eu (ew),** or French **u, eau.** Doubling of vowels to indicate long quantity became exceedingly common in the later period. Such doubling accounts for the present spelling of words like **need, fool, book,** and many others.

Owing to similar inaccuracy and confusion in both vowels and consonants a writer did not always use the same signs for the same sounds. In different dialects there was still further lack of uniformity. All these things point out the Middle English period as the one in which the confusion and unphonetic character of English spelling became first thoroughly rooted.

The general character of Middle English spelling may be seen from the Lord's Prayer in the Wiclifite Bible. The passage represents English of the last of the fourteenth century, the period of Chaucer's writings.

Fadir, halewid be þi name. Þi kingdom come to. ȝyve
Father, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come.   Give

to us to day oure eche dayes breed. And forȝyve to us oure
to us to-day our each day's bread. And forgive to us our

synnes, as and we forȝyven to ech owynge us. And leed
sins,   as also we forgive   each owing us. And lead

not us into temtacioun.[1]
not us into temptation.

In the modern period English spelling has re-
tained, to a great extent, its Middle English
character.   Notwithstanding radical changes of
sound, it has remained essentially unphonetic.
Some further confusion has even been introduced.
One of the two **e** and **o** sounds of Middle English
came to be distinguished in the early modern
period by the spellings **ea, oa,** as to-day in **bead,
boat**.   Unfortunately, the signs have been kept
long after any necessary distinction had disap-
peared.   The same thing has happened in other
cases, and the confusion between spelling and
pronunciation has thus been increased.

The result is a divergence between pronun-
ciation and our so-called orthography, which is

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[1] Luke ix. 2–3. Note the retention of OE. þ for **th**, but not the
crossed **d** (ð). The older **g** also, as in ȝyve, forȝyve, was still used.

unknown in any other language except French. For example, **i** and **y** remain for an original simple sound which has become a diphthong, while **y** is also consonantal. The doubled vowel **o** remains for such different sounds as ū in **do** and **u** in **full**; compare **doom, loom, book, good**. Older **ou** represents not only the diphthong in **house**, but the simple vowel sounds in **through** and **country**. Sounds now exactly alike retain many different spellings; compare **read, feed, he, mete, lief, seize, people**, and the unstressed syllables of **sizar, baker, elixir, favor, murmur**.

These are only a few indications of disagreement between speech and spelling in the modern tongue. Consonant variations are fully as great, or greater. The facts must be especially noted in connection with any attempt to trace a particular word through different periods. One must learn to separate sound from spelling, or interpret sound in spite of spelling, when tracing words from older to more recent forms. The story of English spelling is the story of arrested development, of a fossil form as the visible sign of a much altered speech.

In one other particular modern usage differs

from that of the oldest period. In Old English, compounds were regularly written as one word. In Middle English this custom was partially given up. As a result, the language has compounds of two kinds, some with, others without sign of union. Greater regularity in this respect is highly desirable, and an attempt to encourage it has been made in one of our later American dictionaries.

Early attempts at reform in English spelling have been noted in the sixteenth century. In the seventeenth century a similar proposal was made by Howell, of the *Familiar Letters*. Since the establishment of a standard form by Johnson's *Dictionary*, there have been few modifications except those of Webster. Both British and American English have agreed to disuse **k** of the older **ck** combination in such words as **music, frolic.**

In the past century a host of proposals for further reform have been made, most of them by ignorant or misguided enthusiasts. Some more scholarly suggestions have resulted in such shorter forms as **definit** for **definite, program** for **programme, tho** for **though.** A few such modified forms now appear in American dictionaries. The

advantages of further rational changes are agreed upon by scholars, and the older arguments against them have long since been met. The main difficulty is to break down the force of custom, of which few could give any rational explanation.

CHAPTER V

THE most important element in the spoken form of words is accent. In the Old English period the accent of words was that of all the Teutonic languages. It was an expiratory stress. It was fixed upon a single syllable of each word. It never shifted from one inflected form to another, as in Latin le′o–leo′nis, a′mo–ama′vi. These peculiarities of Teutonic stress have remained in all periods of English.

Besides these the laws of Teutonic accent may be briefly summarized : —

(1) All uncompounded words were accented on the first syllable.

(2) Compound nouns, adjectives, pronouns, and words derived from them, were also accented on the first syllable.

(3) Compound verbs and words derived from them were accented on the first syllable of the root.

Examples of uncompounded words are **ap'ple, bit'ter, hol'low, o'pen.** Examples of compound nouns and adjectives are **af'termath, an'swer, fore'part, fro'ward, in'land, mid'way, off'spring, on'slaught, out'lay, ov'erthrow, un'derling, up'ward.** Examples of compound verbs, with accent on the first syllable of the root, are **forego', ingath'er, offset', overcome'.** On the other hand, compound verbs derived from nouns and adjectives retain the accent of their originals, as **an'swer, blind'fold.** Words derived from compound verbs retain verbal stress, as **begin'ning, forget'ful, misbeha'vior.**

To these simple laws there was one minor modification. The prefixes **be-, for-, ge-** (like German **ge-**), were never stressed, even in nouns and adjectives. This accounts for the present accent of **behalf', behest', forgive'ness, aware', enough'.** In the last two the first syllables represent weak forms of Old English **ge-.** Occasionally, also, the less important part of a compound lost its accent. An example is **Northum'brian,** in which **north** once had the stress according to the usual rule of nouns. These minor laws, however, account for but few words to-day.

The laws of English stress affected most words

entering the language in Old English times. Some, of course, already conformed to English accent, as Danish words, which were already Teutonic. But words of Latin origin usually gave up their stress for that of English. Examples are **ca'lend** from **calen'dæ**, **castel**, " castle," from **castel'-lum**, **dea'con** from **dia'conus**.

The accent of native English words has remained practically the same in all periods. A few slight modifications belong to Middle English times. To the number of prefixes never accented in Old English was added the prefix **un-**, as in **unhap'py, unlove'ly**. In some words the prefixes **al-**, ' all,' **arch-**, and **mis-** also lost stress. Examples are **alone', alread'y, almight'y, although', archbish'op, archdea'con, misbelief', misgiv'ing, mistake'**.

In Middle English, too, certain groups of words grew together, forming new words, which retained the accent of the original group. These are prepositional phrases or, less commonly, adverbial and pronominal groups. Examples are **abed'** (= **on bed**), **before', forev'er, indeed', to-day', upon', within', hereaf'ter, nevertheless', who•ev'er, myself'**.

To these must be added some words in which the accent shifts as they are used in different

ways in the sentence.   Thus, **fifteen** when used attributively, as in " fif'teen years," is accented on the first syllable, like an ordinary adjective. When used without a noun, as " he is **fifteen'**," it takes stress on the last syllable.   So also some original phrases, as **afternoon, inside.**   Yet the great majority of native words show no change from the original accent which they bore centuries ago.

The French words entering Middle English had a different accent from English words.   The French accent was upon the last syllable of a word, unless that syllable was a weak **e.**   Had such words come in great numbers at any one time, they might have modified the English stress. They came gradually, however, a few at a time. Hence, they generally conformed to nouns and adjectives on the one side, or to verbs on the other.   Compare such pairs as **ab'sent–absent',** **ab'stract–abstract', pres'ent–present'.**

The majority of dissyllabic words of French origin entering Middle English adopted the English accent.   Examples of nouns and adjectives are **bar'on, coun'ter, er'mine, jus'tice, man'ner, pris'on, proph'et, stand'ard, trea'son, trea'sure.**   Some verbs

also followed nouns and adjectives, as **mea′sure,
sum′mon, coun′sel, hon′or, suf′fer.** Others followed
English verbs, as **assail′, espy′, comply′.**

On the other hand certain dissyllabic nouns and
adjectives, borrowed in the Middle period, have not
yet assumed initial stress. In some cases they
may have been influenced by similar verbs. Oth-
ers are not popular words, and so have not experi-
enced the full force of the native accent. Examples
are **account′, conceit′, divine′, disdain′, eclipse′, escape′,
extent′, intent′, mistake′, offense′, refrain′, surcharge′.**
There are also a few words from French phrases,
as **adieu′, adroit′, apace′.** These agree with the
native group-words in having stress on the noun,
or principal element.

Polysyllabic words from French also conformed
to English stress in great measure. In them,
however, a new factor entered. Such words bore
a secondary, as well as a primary stress, and
this had its effect in the change. This secondary
stress was usually on the third from the last sylla-
ble, except the weak **e.** In becoming anglicized
the accent usually shifted to the position of the
secondary stress in nouns and adjectives. In
words of three syllables this was to the first, as

in **ac'cident, bach'elor**. In still longer words the
shift did not reach the first syllable, as in **affin'ity,
anniver'sary,** and there it often remained. Yet in
some of these cases there was a second shift to the
initial syllable, as in **mat'rimony, nec'essary, or'di-
nary**. They thus conformed fully to English nouns
and adjectives. In some cases nouns and adjectives
were probably influenced by verbs, as **accor'dant,
acquit'tance,** by the verbs **accord', acquit'**.

Polysyllabic verbs follow the principles al-
ready explained. They retain stress on the last
syllable, as **ascertain', disappear'**; or the accent
has shifted to the position of an original secondary
stress. In the latter case they are accented on the
first syllable, as **con'template, com'promise,** or on
the second, as **affil'iate**. A third class has only par-
tially conformed to native laws. Here belong
words like **abol'ish, accus'tom**.

During the modern period the same influences
have affected borrowed words. Yet a greater num-
ber of learned and literary words have been in-
troduced than at any previous time. Such words
have often not been anglicized in accent. Exam-
ples are late French words, as **attack', burlesque',
caprice', gazette'**. Frequently Latin words have

also kept Latin stress. This is especially true of Latin proper names, but also of some common words, as **abdo′men, deco′rum**. Others have fully conformed to English accent, as **ed′ucator, ag′itator, im′itator**.

Occasionally a word which has acquired native stress has been altered to conform to foreign pronunciation. An example is **hori′zon**, originally from French, and with accent early shifted to the first syllable. Owing to supposed borrowing from Latin, the accent is now on the second syllable. Such cases are not common and do not represent the usual tendency. Some of them were perhaps due to early makers of dictionaries, who did not understand the fundamental laws of English stress.

CHAPTER VI

PHONETIC CHANGE

The English accent is not only the most important element in pronunciation. It is also a fundamental condition of many other changes in the forms of words. By reason of its strength the unstressed parts of words have tended to fall away. Inflectional or other endings, as well as unstressed prefixes, have thus been lost. Owing to the first, most nouns and adjectives of two syllables have become monosyllables. Owing to the second, many compound verbs have lost an unstressed prefix. Except for two or three cases the older prefix **ge-** has been wholly lost.

Such changes have brought about a significant shortening of most classes of words. So common was the shortening of words that Elizabethan critics often complained of the numerous monosyllables in the language. Later a saner view has valued this monosyllabic element for its simplicity

and force. Yet the fact of shortening is a clear one when we compare English with any inflected language.

Apart from shortening, both stressed and un-unstressed parts of words have suffered special changes. We pronounce few words as they were pronounced in the older periods of English. In order to understand these alterations in speech we must consider briefly two kinds of changes. The first are phonetic changes, affecting individual sounds. The second are analogical changes, affecting words in their relation to other words.

Phonetic changes have affected both vowels and consonants in all periods. We shall consider some of the most important. For complete treatment in this place, the subject is too complicated. We shall begin with consonants, too, since they are the most stable of speech-sounds. Thus, most consonants are still pronounced practically as in Old English. Most Old English consonants are also preserved to-day. On the other hand, some consonants and combinations of consonants have been much altered. The significant alterations of each period may be briefly summarized.

The Consonants

During the Old English period the following general changes took place:—

OE.[1] c became ch when before (sometimes after) a
    palatal vowel, as in child, chaff, beech.

OE. cg, under similar circumstances, became the
    modern j sound, as in bridge, hedge, sledge.

OE. g before a palatal vowel became y, as in yard.

OE. hl, hr, hn, initially, lost h, as in link, nut, ring.

OE. sc became the sh sound, as in shall, shell,
    shrink.

OE. wl, initially, lost w, as in lisp.

These are the changes in stressed syllables. In unstressed syllables consonants were not only modified, but often altogether lost.

Changes in Middle English consonants were still fewer. By the close of the period these two had fully taken place:—

ME. h, later gh, as to-day in light, right, had disappeared from speech.

ME. g in the combination ng was lost, except before a vowel. Compare sing with finger.[2]

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[1] These simple abbreviations will be easily understood. OE. is Old English; ME., Middle English; MnE., Modern English.

[2] Sing was formerly pronounced exactly like fing of finger.

In unstressed syllables ME. **c** and **g** disappeared from the endings of such words as **lightly, many,** leaving the endings **-ly, -y,** so common in the modern tongue. In other cases, older **g** became **w,** and later a vowel, as in **sorrow.** Final n, which had been partly lost in late Old English, now disappeared in many verbal forms.

Consonant changes in Modern English have mainly affected combinations of sounds.

MnE. **gn, kn** became simple **n,** though still written, as in **gnat, knight.**

MnE. **wr** also became **r** in sound, though again written, as in **write.**

MnE. **s** and a following **y** sound became **sh,** as in **passion, pension, nation,** and initially in **sure, sugar.**

MnE. **z** and a following **y** sound became **zh,** as in **usual, hosier, leisure, decision.**

In the eighteenth century **t** and a following **y** sound became **ch,** as in **nature, picture.** At the same time **d** and a **y** sound became a sound like **j,** as in **verdure, grandeur.** In the modern period, also, a final **b** was lost in a few words like **lamb, limb,** and a medial **t** in such as **castle, often.**

Some minor changes are more or less general in all periods. These may be illustrated without attempting to indicate the particular time of occurrence. For example, a consonant produced by breath only may become voiced.

A **p** or **t** has become **b** or **d**, as in **lobster, cobweb, clod, pride.**

An **f** or **th** has become **v** or **th** hard, as in **of, with, the, then.**

Final **s** has become **z**, as in **has, was, odds, hoes, shades.**

Final **b, d, v, z** have become **p, t, f, s** in such words as **unkempt, built, bereft, lost,** as compared with **comb, build, bereave, lose.**

Consonants are sometimes modified to conform to neighboring sounds.

An **m** became **n**, as in **Hants,** shorter form of **Hamptonshire.**

An **f** became **m**, as in **woman,** originally **wif** (wife) **man.**

A **th** became **f**, as in **Suffolk,** originally **Southfolk.**

By the opposite change one of two similar consonants becomes dissimilar. A second **r** has become **l**, as in **marble, purple,** from **marbre, purpre.**

Again, consonants are sometimes added to words, transposed within them, or lost entirely.

A **p, b, t,** or **d** has been added, as in **empty, ember, earnest, sound.**

An **r** has been transposed, as in **bird, grass,** from **brid, gærs.**

An **sp** was once **ps,** as in **wasp, clasp.**

Initial **n** has been lost from such words as **adder, auger.**

More commonly a consonant has been lost by gradually shading out into a vowel, and then disappearing in speech. Examples are **two, who, talk, calm,** where **w, l** are no longer pronounced. So, after vowels, Middle English **g, w** themselves became vowels, and the two vowels then became diphthongs. Examples are **day, way, hew, law, brought, blow.** In a few cases one consonant has been substituted for another, though the spelling may not show the change. A **d** has been substituted for **th** in **murder, burden;** an **f** has taken the place of an older **gh** sound, as in **cough, laugh, tough.** Yet most such minor changes occur in few words, and are not at variance with what has been said of consonant stability.

The Vowels

Vowel sounds in English are not so stable as those of consonants. They are more open, and the position of the vocal organs in making them is more likely to alter. All <u>long</u> vowels have changed character since Old English times. Of short vowels, only e and i have in general remained unchanged. The history of vowel sounds is therefore one of considerable alterations, since our Teutonic forefathers landed in Britain. To take account of them all would be impossible in this place. Yet some of the directions of change are important in tracing identity of words in different periods.

The long vowels of Old English were ā as in arm, ǣ as in care, ē as in they, ī as in machine, ō as in no, ū as in doom, ȳ as German ü of grün, ' green.' There were also two long diphthongs, ēa, ēo, which began with the sounds of ǣ, ē above, and ended with the vowel sound of but. These diphthongs and ȳ developed exactly like ǣ, ē, and i respectively, so that they may easily be classed with the long vowels.

If now we arrange these long sounds in the

order of pitch, we may easily illustrate the general
directions of change in the three periods of Eng-
lish.   In this we consider only the normal develop-
ment of the language of the Midlands, dialectal
English being disregarded.[1]

OE.	ME.	16–17TH CENT.	18–19TH CENT.
		ai (*my*)	ai
ī, ȳ	ī	ī	ī
ē, ēo	ē (*they*)	ē	ē
ǣ, ēa	ę̄ (*there*)	ę̄	[ē]
ā	[ā]	[ā]	ā
	ǭ (*lord*)	[ǭ]	ǭ
ō	ō	ō	ō
ū	ū	ū (*doom*)	ū
		au (*house*)	au

This table shows that three changes had
taken place by the beginning of Middle English
times.   OE. ȳ had lost its likeness to German ü
and fell in with OE. ī of **machine**.   The OE. diph-
thongs became simple sounds like their first ele-
ments.   OE. ā became lowered in pitch, and was
pronounced like **o** in **lord**, **a** in **all**.   The gap in
the ME. vowels, made by ā becoming ǭ, was filled

[1] As few phonetic signs are used as possible.   An ē with a tag
(ę̄) represents an open sound like that in **there, care**; ǭ, an open
sound like that in **lord**.   The bracketed vowels are new long sounds
from short vowels.   These came in to fill what would otherwise be
gaps.

by a short **a** which was lengthened. The line was again complete, with one more sound than in Old English.

From Middle to Modern English the changes are somewhat more numerous, and in two directions. The high-pitched vowels have gone still higher, the low-pitched vowels still lower in pitch. By the first, ME. ā became ę̄ (**there**), ME. ę̄ (**there**) rose to ē (**they**), ME. ē (**they**) became ī (**machine**). Meanwhile ME. ī had become a diphthong, still written **i** or **y**, but pronounced nearly as **a** (**artistic**) and **i** (**hit**) closely united. By the second, ME. ǭ became ō (**no**) and ME. ō (**nō**) became ū in **doom**, in which the **o** spelling is still retained. Like ME. ī, ME. ū became a diphthong made up of **a** (**artistic**) and ū (**doom**), spoken together.

To fill the gaps thus caused, new long ā again developed from short **a**, and a new ǭ from various sources, as in the words **horse, law, cause**. In the second modern period two of the high-pitched vowels have gone one step higher. Earlier MnE. ę̄ (**there**) became ē (**they**), and ē (**they**) became ī (**machine**).

The changes in the long vowels will be best

appreciated by some examples of Modern English words. These we may arrange under the vowels of the oldest period.

OE. ĭ; ȳ: ice, life, my, rime, wife, wise; dive, hide, bride, mice.

OE. ē; ēo: feet, heel, queen, sleeve; free, glee, knee, see.

OE. ǣ; ēa: heal, heath, meal, sea, wreath; east, leaf, sheaf, seam.

OE. ā: bone, foam, ghost, grove, home, loam, so, toe.

OE. ō: boot, doom, do, food, gloom, shoe, too, woo.

OE. ū: cow, house, how, loud, owl, south, town.

The short vowels show a scheme at once simpler and more complicated. Certain short vowels have been fairly stable in all periods of English; others have changed their character materially. Especially the short vowels show a greater influence of neighboring sounds. For this reason they have been less likely to continue their development with unvarying regularity.

The following table will give some idea of the more regular development of short vowels, dotted lines showing less regular changes: —

OE.	ME.	MnE.
i, y	i	i
e, eo	e	e
æ, ea		æ (*hat*)
a	a	a (*artistic*)
ǫ	ǫ	o
o		
u	u	u
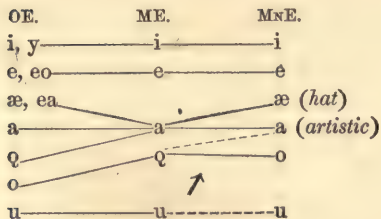
There are here some interesting general lines of development. OE. **i** and **e** remained in Middle English, and OE. **y** and **eo** united with them, as in the case of the corresponding long sounds. On the other hand, OE. **æ, ea, a, ǫ**, united in ME. **a** (**artistic**). To fill this gap, OE. **o** (**obey**) shifted to a more open sound, that of **o** in **hot** when pronounced with the vowel of **lord** but shorter. The shift was thus to a sound next higher in pitch.

From Middle to Modern English **i** and **e** have retained their positions. ME. **a** has again split into two sounds, **æ** (**hat, man**) again appearing. At the same time, ME. **ǫ** sometimes became **a** (**artistic**), as in certain pairs of words, **strop–strap, flop–flap, God–gad**. This occurred in the sixteenth century. Later, words with **a** (**artistic**) assumed the sound of the vowel in **man**, as other short **a**'s had done. On the other hand, in American English, the **ǫ** sound has often become **a** (**artistic**) in a late period.

The development of the **u** vowel is peculiar, as compared with any of the others. The Middle English sound of **u** (**full**) has been retained in only a few words. In these it has been kept by the influence of certain consonants. Examples are **full, bull, pull, wolf**, in the last indicated by **o**. The more common development is not easily indicated on the table. By this, older **u** has lost all real connection with **u** sounds, and is pronounced like the so-called **u** of **but**. This is a vowel with a pitch between **e** and **a**. On the table the arrow suggests the direction of change.

Examples of the short vowels are as follows: —

OE. **i; y**: **bill, hilt, smith, still, will; guilt, hill, kin, sin.**

OE. **e; eo**: **fell, tell, yell, well; heaven, hence, seven, yellow.**

OE. **æ; ea**: **ash, asp, hath, fathom, mash; narrow, shadow, sparrow.**

OE. **a**: **arrow, cat, flat, have, sallow, salve.**

OE. **ǫ**: **and, angle, hang, hand, lank, man, rank.**

OE. **o**: **borrow, box, gossip, flock, rock.**

OE. **u**: **full, wolf, wool; gust, lung, rung, rust, thus.**

The Diphthongs

As to diphthongs, we have shown by the table that those of Old English became simple sounds in Middle English. In the latter period there developed a number of new diphthongs from simple vowels and following consonants which became vowels. We may therefore start with Middle English diphthongs arranged according to pitch of their first elements.

```
ME.                        MnE.
iu (ü)————————————————iu
eu (eau)
ei————————————————————ē (they)
ai
au
ǫu- - - - - - - - - - -ǫ (lord)
ou————————————————————ō
oi————————————————————oi
ui- - - - - - - - - - -ū (fruit)
```

Of these we may say at once that **oi** is from French, the one distinctive sound from that source. The last, too (**ui**), was probably never a true diphthong on English soil. At least it was soon united with the **iu** diphthong as in **suit**, or became simple **ū** as in **fruit**.

Otherwise the diphthongs have been much sim-

plified in the course of their history. ME. iu and
eu, increased from French u, eau, ieu, came together
as MnE. iu (few). They have retained their spell-
ing, however, as in few, new, mute, beauty, lieu.
ME. ei and ai became one after a time, and later
the simple sound of ē (they). ME. au, with some
ǫu's became ǫ (lord), as in cause, ought. Most ǫu's
united with ou and became ō (no), as in know,
grow. ME. oi has remained. It often became ai
(my), however, as shown by such rimes as join–fine
in the best poets of the eighteenth century.

From the whole diphthongic system of Middle
English only two diphthongs have thus been pre-
served. They are iu (few) and oi (boil). These,
with ai (my) and au (house), which developed from
long vowels, make up the four principal diphthongs
of Modern English. In addition, certain long vow-
els of earlier Modern English have become more or
less diphthongic. The best example, because so
spoken by all, is the former ī (machine) before r, as
in dear, fear. In such words we really say i (hit)
and nearly u of but. In British English the for-
mer simple vowels ī (machine), ē (they), ō (no), ū
(through) have become diphthongs. This change
is not usual in America, though such vowels often

have a more or less pronounced vanish. These last are nineteenth-century changes, and may indicate the direction of future development.

Examples of the modern development of the diphthongs are: —

ME. iu (ü): Jew, rule, Tuesday; duke, excuse, hue, mute.

ME. eu (eau): ewe, few, hew, new, newt; beauty.

ME. ei: hay, nay, raise, sail, they, way.

ME. ai: day, nail, pail, snail, tail.

ME. au: hawk, law, lord; cause, gauze, pause.

ME. ǫu: brought, cough, sought, thought.

ME. ou: blow, crow, grow, know, low, slow, stow.

ME. oi: boil, foil, joy, oil, toil.

ME. ui: bruit, fruit, recruit.

In connection with diphthongs, some reference has been made to foreign-derived sounds. An example is the diphthong oi from French. How far other foreign sounds were actually used by native speakers cannot be accurately determined. Usually, at least, foreign words came in so gradually as to accommodate themselves to native sounds. There is no proof that they ever affected the pronunciation of native words. The evidence is

mainly the other way, as already shown in regard to certain consonant sounds.

In other words, the process of anglicizing borrowed words has been a strong one in all periods of English. Only in late times have educated speakers tended to use foreign pronunciations of some foreign-derived words, as of proper names. On the other hand, English spelling is largely a mixture of foreign and native forms. For this reason any study of English sounds is made doubly difficult by the multitude of antiquated signs representing them.

As in the case of consonants, certain general changes have affected vowels. A few that have left permanent effects on the language must be mentioned. One of the most interesting of these is vowel mutation. This we still preserve as a plural sign in certain nouns, as **man–men, foot–feet, mouse–mice**. Similar mutations, however, were once common in all classes of words. Knowing this, we may connect words that might not otherwise be seen to have any connection.

Mutation examples may be arranged under the various vowels of their present forms, without regard to those of Old English : —

a : **Frank–French, Wales–Welsh, Canterbury–Kent,**
     bank–bench, fall–fell.
o : **over–eaves ; gold–gild, fore–first, corn–kernel.**
u : **full–fill, lust–list, stunt–stint.**
o : **dole–deal, whole–heal, lode–lead.**
oo : **doom–deem, food–feed, blood–bleed.**
ou : **foul–(de)file, proud–pride.**

No change exactly like that of mutation has affected vowels since Old English times. Certain other changes, however, occur with greater or less frequency in all periods. The first of these is shortening. Even the spelling of such words as **dead, death, breath, been, blood, book, look,** shows that their vowels were once long, though all are now short. The verbs **keep, sleep** have long vowels in the present, but short vowels in the past tense, as **kept, slept.** Words in which the vowel was originally long, but without indication in the spelling, are **red, hot, wet, fat, ten.** With **hot** compare **heat,** and with **ten** the last part of **thir-teen.**

Lengthening of short vowels has also occurred. In many cases these are regular lengthenings, as before certain consonant combinations in **old, field, child, find, hound, beard, board, climb.** Lengthen-

ing has also taken place in such words as **hazel, naked, weasel, change, danger, bounce, count, all, small**. Most such changes belong to Old or Middle English, but the last two are modern examples.

We have shown how Old English diphthongs became simple vowels, and how Middle English **i, ū** became diphthongs in Modern English. Similar changes may take place in any period. Two vowels, not a diphthong, may be fused into one in pronunciation. Thus the words **don, doff** are really a fusing of **do on, do off,** with **do** in its older sense of 'put, place.' The words **lord, head, York** also represent contraction of two vowels after the loss of an intervening consonant.

Vowels may be changed in character under the influence of neighboring sounds. Thus e **(men)** became i **(hit)** before a nasal consonant, as in **link, singe, string.** A comparison of **won't** with **will,** from which it is derived, shows that the i sound of the latter has been altered by the preceding **w.** Other minor alterations might be illustrated.

UNSTRESSED SYLLABLES

The changes so far indicated have been those of stressed syllables. Unstressed syllables suffer even

greater alterations. This is owing to the weaker force with which they are spoken. Thus vowels, consonants, and even whole syllables have disappeared from certain words. The name **York** was a word of three syllables in Old English. So **Scotch** and **Welsh** were dissyllabic. These are examples of many similar changes.

The most general changes have affected inflectional syllables. Most inflectional syllables in Old English ended in a vowel, **n**, or **m**. As a rule all such endings have disappeared when in unstressed syllables. Yet the ending **-en** remains in two or three plurals, as **oxen, children**, and in a few past participles like **driven, risen**. The loss of final **n** or **m** of older inflections left a final vowel. This, in its turn, has also disappeared. In fact, most of the older inflectional system has passed wholly away. We have left of such endings only **-s (es)** of nouns, **-ed (d, t)** and **-ing** of verbs, with a few pronoun forms. Not only inflectional but stem endings have been lost in speech. The spelling of **ale, more** indicates that they were formerly two syllables each.

Unstressed elements at the beginning of words have also vanished entirely. Thus **down, way-**

ward are from older **adown, awayward**. So **scorn, scour** are from older French forms with initial **e**. Sometimes, it is true, both forms remain, as **alone-lone, escape–scape, account–count**. In other cases, unstressed syllables have been reduced by the loss of a medial sound. Thus **else** and **hence** are from **elles, henes**. In the same way the older endings **-es, -ed** of nouns and verbs have been reduced to the single consonants **s** (= **z**) and **d**.

Where vowels in unstressed syllables have not been entirely lost, they have been weakened or obscured. Thus the unstressed syllables of **vulgar, baker, elixir, favor, murmur** are all pronounced alike, though originally different as shown by the spelling. Lack of stress has thus been a factor in many changes of English words. The full explanation of these belongs to a more elaborate treatise.

CHAPTER VII

ANALOGY

PHONETIC changes are mainly due to physiological relations. Imperfect articulation in each generation accounts for some changes. Greater ease in speaking accounts for others. Words are also altered by analogy, or likeness to other words.

In English, with its fixed and unphonetic spelling, even written forms have affected pronunciation, especially of learned words. For example, a good many words of French origin are now pronounced with the English **th** of **thick, thin**. Such are **author, authority, apothecary, theory, throne, Bartholomew, Matthew**. In all these, French **th** was a **t** sound, and spelling alone has caused them to assume English **th**. Compare the earlier **autor** of Milton, and **apotecarie** of Chaucer. Note also that the abbreviated forms of **Bartholomew** and **Matthew** are Bart (Bat) and **Mat**, all showing the original **t**. The names **Thomas, Esther** have resisted this analogy and are still pronounced with **t**.

Similar analogies account for the early pronunciation of German names like **Göttingen**, **Würtemberg**. These and others were printed, written, and pronounced without modified vowels. For several centuries Latin was pronounced after the analogy of English words, except that the Latin accent was retained. All know that the mistakes in learning a foreign language are due to the influence of the mother tongue, with which we are so much better acquainted.

By the opposite analogy, foreign names, once fully anglicized, have sometimes been made to conform to foreign models. Thus **Calais**, still pronounced in England to rime with **Paris**, is usually given a French pronunciation in America. In the Elizabethan age, **Rome** was pronounced like **room**, as shown by the well-known pun in *Julius Cæsar*. By influence of foreign pronunciation, perhaps partly of spelling, it now rimes with **home**. The same influence accounts for the foreign accent of **Madrid'**, **Milan'**, after they had been fully anglicized as **Mad'rid**, **Mi'lan**. Common words are less frequently made foreign, but **chivalry** once had the **ch** of **church**, instead of **ch** as in modern French.

More vital effects of analogy have occurred when

words have been altered in relation to meaning or use, or both. Such changes often occur in the language of children. Learning language by imitation, the child is most strongly impressed by the common forms. When he has learned these, he applies them in all cases. He thus says **good–gooder–goodest,** just as he has learned to say **strong–stronger–strongest**. In a similar way he says **give–gived,** as he learns to say **love–loved**.

Exactly what the child does would be done by all if it were not for the influence of schools and the established forms of the standard language. It is done by the illiterate, and was even more common in the past. Indeed, it is but natural for the people to regularize and simplify language on the basis of the more common forms of speech. This tendency we call analogy, and it has been a large factor in the development of English.

Analogy affects words in relation to meaning and use. On the basis of the latter, especially, the numerous inflectional forms of older English have been reduced to a few simple forms. For example, there were once several declensions of nouns. There were thus several endings expressing the idea of the genitive (our possessive) case. One

form, however, was unusually common, and this genitive in -es (our s, es) was extended to practically all nouns.

In the plural a more sweeping simplification took place. The plural genitive was far less commonly used than the singular, and was gradually lost. For similar reasons the dative also disappeared. These were both replaced by the more common nominative-accusative, ending in -as. This ending later became -es and remains to-day as -s(es) in the plurals of all but a few nouns. Such regularization and simplification has affected all inflectional forms to a wonderful degree, as we shall see under inflection.

Analogy has also affected other unstressed parts of many words. Thus the adverbial suffix -ly, though established in Old English in its older form, was far less common than to-day. It has since been greatly extended in use, and freely added to borrowed as well as native words. It even affects usage at present. Under the influence of such forms as **secondly, thirdly,** and others, **first** often becomes **firstly**. The commonest ending of adjectives, -y as in **happy,** has also been gradually extended to many to which it did not once belong.

Examples of borrowed words so affected are **balmy, contrary, palmy**. It has also indirectly modified other endings, as in **thorny, jolly, tardy**.

Even foreign suffixes, when fully a part of English, have been used in the same way. Compare the French suffixes **-age, -ard**, in **tillage, cabbage, sausage, dotard, gizzard**. Examples of analogy in suffixes might easily be multiplied. For instance, the noun suffix **-ing** has modified the original endings of present participles and of some nouns. It has also been freely extended to new words.

Illustrations of analogy in suffixes may be paralleled by those in prefixes. The prefix **a-** in **abide, arise** has been extended to **arouse, accurse**. It also represents several prefixes which have been modified under its influence. It comes from **of-** in **adown**; **and-** in **along**; **ge-** in **aware, afford**; **on-** in **away, afoot**; **at** in **ado**; **en** in **anoint**.

Analogy sometimes changes words so that they seem to have a relation to others with which they have no real connection. For example, **wormwood** has nothing to do with either **worm** or **wood**, but is a modification of OE. **wermod**. The latter had lost its meaning and was modified to give it a likeness to well-known words.

Similar changes have often taken place in language. The last parts of **bridegroom, acorn, titmouse,** have been modified to conform to **groom, corn, mouse.** Not understanding this law of analogy, Noah Webster insisted on spelling the first **bridegoom** in his *Dictionary* of 1828. The word **titmouse** even forms a plural **titmice,** yet **titmouse** is the name of a bird, the last part of which once meant 'little bird.'

Borrowed words are even more likely to be changed in form, since they do not readily suggest any meaning. ⨯Thus **asparagus** has become **sparrowgrass.** So **causeway, frontispiece, penthouse, pickax,** have been similarly modified in their last elements by **way, piece, house, ax.** Such alterations are often ludicrous and are readily seized upon by the humorist. Even Shakespeare makes Mistress Quickly alter **homicide** into **honey-seed.** Other examples of similar humor are found in Sheridan's Mrs. Malaprop and Shillaber's Mrs. Partington.

A less striking form of analogy modifies certain grammatical forms. By it words ending in -**s(es)** pronounced **z** (**ez**) have been regarded as plurals and so used. Compare **alms, eaves, riches,** all

originally singular. A new singular is sometimes made from such forms, as in **riddle, burial** among native words, and **cherry, pea, shay, sherry** among those from foreign sources. Even proper names are sometimes treated in this way. So have arisen the forms **Chinee, Portuguee,** from **Chinese, Portuguese.**

It is the same influence which has caused two of our indefinite pronouns to assume the inflection of nouns when used substantively. We thus have **one–ones, other–others.** Such adjectives as **vegetable, sweet,** have also assumed noun inflection when used as nouns, and we have the new words **vegetables, sweets.** So the verbs **attack, drown,** when becoming **attackt, drownd** in illiterate speech, form new past tenses **attackted, drownded.**

Analogy may affect words in sentences, or syntax. The folk-mind is influenced by prevailing types of sentences. A singular noun is usually followed by a singular verb, without intervening word to disturb the relation. If a plural noun intervenes for any reason, the verb tends to become plural. Compare 'a company of men **are** going.' In a similar way an adjective pronoun may agree with the principal noun of a phrase, rather than with its

grammatical partner. Compare '**these** kind of knaves.'

Other examples show similar influence. An adverb is placed immediately before its verb for emphasis, as in '**strongly** urge.' Under the influence of this order, an adverb is often placed between **to** and its infinitive, as in 'to **strongly** urge.' So Shakespeare's 'I'll be **friends** with thee' shows the influence of such expressions as 'we'll be **friends**.' Even these examples give a slight idea of how important has been the influence of analogy in the development of English speech. Far from being an unnatural influence, too, analogy is both natural and inevitable in all languages.

III

THE ENGLISH VOCABULARY

CHAPTER VIII

OLD ENGLISH

WHEN Englishmen came to Britain their vocabulary was in the main a homogeneous one. It consisted first of Teutonic words common to English and the other languages of the group. Then there were such words as had been formed after the separation of the English from their kinsmen on the continent. These included all but the smallest number of words. A very small number had already been borrowed from the Romans. Some of the latter are **chalk, coulter, crisp, fuller** (of cloth), **mint, Saturday, short**. Even thus early began the borrowing from other tongues.

How large the English vocabulary was, when our Teutonic fathers came to Britain, cannot be known. The adventurous character of the people is good proof that they had advanced beyond the

original rude state. There is some reason to believe they already had some unwritten literature. Whatever was true at this time, before the close of Old English the word-stock was considerable. The most complete dictionary of Old English contains some forty thousand words. This is about the number in Johnson's *Dictionary*. The latter by no means contained all English words of its time, but the comparison will give some idea of the development of Old English speech.

By what means had the English vocabulary so greatly increased ? The increase must be due to the development of the people, and the enlargement of their ideas in many ways. They had established kingdoms in Britain. These had waged many wars among themselves, first one then another gaining supremacy. They had adopted the religion of the civilized world and its literature. They had protected their land for many years against the Danes, and had finally received large additions to their numbers from that race. They had come into direct intercourse with France, and had also received some increase of population from that source. All these influences affected the word-stock of Englishmen.

The special means for enlargement of the vocabulary were two. First, was the making of new words within the language. Second, foreign words were more or less freely borrowed. For Old English the first was by far the most important. This means requires to be subdivided in its turn. New words were largely made by the use of native prefixes and suffixes. Many of these elements have been wholly or in part lost, and others have been obscured by later changes. Some idea of them, however, may be gained from those which have been preserved.

Old English prefixes which have remained in the language appear in such words as, —

a-bide	for-get	off-spring	un-known
an-swer	forth-with	on-ward	under-tow
after-ward	mid-wife	or-deal	up-most
be-hind	mis-hap	to-day	with-stand

Even these will give little idea of the frequency of such prefixes in words of all classes during the oldest period. Some of them would no longer be regarded as prefixes at all. Of some only one example remains at present. Many of them are not living in the sense of being used in making new compounds.

Many suffixes have also left no trace in English of to-day. The following words will give some idea of the larger number once in use : —

Noun suffixes: **king-dom, vix-en, bak-er, child-hood, God-head, think-ing, bump-kin, bant-ling, kind-ness, friend-ship, spin-ster.**

Adjective suffixes : **gold-en, two-fold, hand-ful, child-like, hap-less, like-ly, hand-some, for-ward, happ-y.**

Verbal suffixes : **fast-en, knowl-edge, clean-se.**

The most important verbal suffixes are wholly lost, and cannot therefore be illustrated. Thus causative and inchoative verbs were freely formed by Old English suffixes. For example, **lay, raise, set,** are causative verbs, to **lie, rise, sit,** and were once formed by a suffix. The only difference between the verbs to-day is in their vowels, — differences really caused by the suffix since lost. Besides, the minor classes of words, as adverbs and pronouns, were formed to some extent by suffixes.

The native vocabulary was greatly extended in its place-names. The most common of these are known from the native endings **-ham** and **-ton**. Examples are **Dur-ham, Hors-ham, Brigh-ton, Hor-**

ton. These suffixes are reduced forms of **home, town**, and are especially common in native settlements. Other suffixes may be classed as those easily recognized as independent words, and those which are mainly suffixes.

Of the first are **-field, -ford, -land, -stead**.

Of the second, **-bury** (**borough**), **bourne** (**burn**) 'brook,' **-hithe** 'harbor,' **-low** 'hill,' **-stock** (**stoke**), **-stow, -wich** (**wick**).

Here may be noted also the English patronymic ending **-ing** 'son of.' It occurs in many names such as **Basing, Haring, Manning**. It belongs here because it enters into many place-names. Examples are **Birm-ing-ham, Buck-ing-ham, Wals-ing-ham**.

The second method of increasing the word-stock within the language was by union of independent words. This method, like the other, was common to all members of the Teutonic group, as also to the Indo-European family. Some idea of the freedom with which such compounds were formed may be gained from the following examples. In the largest dictionary of Old English the word **land** is part of sixty-three compounds. The word **even**, 'evening' enters into twenty-six such compounds, and **life** into twenty-seven.

The expressiveness of such compound words may be gained from a few of them that have not been preserved. Such are **life-busy**, **life-care**, **life-day**, **life-fast** 'having life,' **life-ward** 'guardian of life,' **life-way**, **life-well** 'living spring,' **life-win** 'joy of life.' These typical examples might be greatly increased in number. Yet it is still difficult to show how large and effective the older vocabulary really was.

There was a third more indirect means of enlarging the vocabulary. Change of vowel is characteristic of certain words in English, as **man–men**. These are parts of one inflection. The same change, however, occurred in words which, though from the same root, became entirely independent. When this was so the word-stock was virtually increased by a considerable number of new forms. These may be illustrated by such examples as, —

sale–sell	dole–deal
tale–tell	food–feed
long–length	blood–bleed
gold–gild	grow–green ('growing
full–fill	color')
thumb–thimble	proud–pride
lode–lead ('direct')	foul–(de)file

Some idea of the richness and flexibility of Old English may be gained by comparison. The poem *Beowulf* consists of some three thousand lines. In it there are nineteen synonyms for **ocean,** nine for **ship,** and eleven for **sword**. These are all simple words. There are besides twenty-three compounds meaning 'ocean,' twelve meaning 'ship,' and eighteen meaning 'sword.' Still further, there are many descriptive phrases for these ideas. There are at least ten of these for 'ocean,' making in the one poem fifty-two different expressions for this one idea. Nor is this comparison exceptional for the literature as a whole, though poetry naturally uses more figurative language than prose.

Borrowing in Old English

The native vocabulary was somewhat increased in Old English by borrowing from other languages. This took place when the people were in direct contact with some other nation, or in direct communication through trade or literature. Under these circumstances words would be caught up in speech, and some of them would be added to the permanent word-stock. Yet the borrowing of Old English was mainly of the unconscious sort.

There was no conscious coining from foreign material as often to-day.

The first of such borrowing resulted from contact with the Celts. Though the latter became subject to the Teutons, some of their words found their way into speech and have remained to the present. Examples are **bannock, brat** 'mantle, rag,' later 'child,' **brock, cradle, curse, down** 'hill,' **dun** 'dark color,' **mattock**. In addition some words of Latin origin seem to have come in Celtic forms. Such are **alms, ass, Christ**.

The largest class of Celtic words in English consists of names for places and natural objects in Britain. These remained among our ancestors much as names from the languages of the North American Indians have remained in America. Such Celtic names are found in all parts of England, but especially in the north and west. They are most common in Scotland and Ireland. Examples are names of rivers, as **Avon, Usk (Ux)**; and mountains, as **Pen, Ben**. Note also the following: —

aber, 'mouth,' in **Aberdeen**, 'mouth of the Dee,' and others.

dun, 'protected place,' in **Dunbar, Dundee, Dumbarton**.

inch, 'island,' in **Inchcape.**
inver, 'mouth of river,' in **Inveraray, Inverness.**
kill, 'church,' in **Kildare, Kilmarnock.**
llan, 'sacred place, church,' in **Llandaff, Llanfair.**

With Celtic borrowings came also a few Latin words which had survived among the Celts. Such are **lake, mount, port, street, wall, wick, wine.** Latin **castra,** 'camp,' also remains in such names as **Chester, Winchester, Leicester, Lancaster,** and others.

The most considerable borrowing from Latin resulted from the Christianization of Britain. Yet Christian teachers made no radical efforts to alter English speech. They learned English, and adapted native words to the new ideas. From them such words as **bless, Easter, ghost, God, heaven, lent,** acquired the Christian senses they have since borne. New compounds were also formed, as **Gospel, Lady day.** In fact, Christian conceptions were usually expressed by English words, rather than by borrowed ones. The same was true of conceptions connected with literature and mediæval studies. Such terms as arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, grammar, rhetoric, music, medicine, mechanics, were translated into English.

Notwithstanding this, a number of Latin words gradually became a part of English speech. Some idea of them may be gained from the following classes : —

Church words : **alb, altar, archbishop, bishop, candle, church, cowl, creed, deacon, devil, font, martyr, mass, minster, monk, nun, organ, pall, pope, priest, psalms, shrine, temple.**

Tree and plant names : **beet, box, chervil, fennel, feverfew, gladen** 'sword-grass,' **lily, mallow, mint, mul(berry), palm, pea, pear, pepper, periwinkle, pine, plant, plum, poppy, savine, spelt.**

Animal names : **capon, doe, lobster, mussel, pea-(cock), phœnix, trout, turtle(dove).**

Miscellaneous : **butter, canker, cap, cheese, chest, cook, copper, cup, dish, fan, fever, fiddle, fork, imp, inch, kiln, kitchen, linen, mat, mill, mortar, must** 'wine,' **pan, pilch, pile, pillow, pin, pit, pitch, plaster, pole, punt, sack, shambles, sickle, silk, sock, sole, strap, tile, tippet, tun, tunic.**

These are all nouns, as are the majority of borrowed words in all languages. Names of things are more frequently borrowed than words of any other character. Besides, a very few Latin verbs

were introduced, as **dight**, **offer**, **shrive**, **spend**, **stop**. There were two adjectives also, **crisp**, and **short**.

The incursions and conquests of the Danes also brought important borrowings. Yet Norse words were not introduced into literature at once. They were not mainly literary words, and they were not found in districts in which literature was then common. For these reasons most of them do not begin to appear in English writings until Middle English. Some of those found in the oldest period are **aloft**, **call**, **crave**, **fellow**, **haven**, **hit**, **knife**, **law**, **skin**, **take**, **wrong**. The commonness of such words shows how close must have been the union of these two members of the Teutonic race.

The Norse influence sometimes resulted in new compounds of native words. Most of these can be illustrated only by Old English, but a few may be given. The last part of **boatswain** is Norse rather than English, as is also the first part of **reindeer**. The name **wapentake** for an English district is also English and Norse. Our word **tidings,** based on English **tide** 'time,' and the suffix **-ing,** was first made under the influence of a similar Norse word.

The Danish settlements in England left their impress in many proper names. Such are most

common in the old Danelaw, but also occur in other parts of England. Danish place-names are especially indicated by well-known suffixes. Two of these are -**by** 'town,' as in **Derby, Grimsby, Whitby,** and -**thwaite**, as in **Langthwaite**. Personal names of Norse origin are those ending in -**son**, as **Gibson, Johnson, Thomson,** and many others. Given names, as **Harold**, also occur.

Before the close of Old English, the influence of Norman French had begun. More intimate relations of England and France belong to the eleventh century. Even so early some French words may have been introduced. The Norman Conquest greatly strengthened such influence. French words do not appear in literature much before the Middle period, yet some are found in the *Chronicle* under years of the eleventh century. Examples are **arblast, bastard, castle, cancelere** 'chancellor,' **dub** 'strike,' in conferring knighthood, **prison, tower**.

CHAPTER IX

THE VOCABULARY OF MIDDLE ENGLISH

THE history of the vocabulary in Old English is mainly a story of changes within the native stock. The additions from outside sources are very few. The Middle English period, on the other hand, is one of a great increase of words from foreign sources. New words continued to be made from native material, but this was no longer the only important source of supply. The habit of adopting foreign words became fully established, and was opposed by none. This borrowed element, therefore, must receive a larger treatment than before 1100.

When the borrowed element is thus emphasized we speak of words as used in literature, or as they appear in the dictionary. The spoken language did not change rapidly or radically. The people continued to use the native element mainly, continued to form new compounds and use native prefixes and suffixes. This is clear from the use of less learned writers. It is even more certain from

the persistence of the native element in the essentials of grammatical structure. The inflectional forms retained were from the native English. All changes of inflection, and most of those in syntax, can be explained by influences at work within the language.

Yet the native element was not stable. The wearing away of unstressed prefixes and endings continued. By these changes all classes of words were altered. Especially the differences between nouns and adjectives on the one side, and verbs on the other, began to disappear.

Not alone were unstressed elements lost. Even stressed prefixes were weakened in meaning and often disappeared. For example, the prefix **or-**, 'without, old, early,' is recorded in more than fifty Old English nouns and adjectives. In the Middle English dictionary of Stratmann there are only twelve. This seems fairly to represent the loss of prefixes in other cases. Only one prefix was somewhat increased in use from the falling together of two or three once different. Thus the prefix **a-** of Middle English represents at least four of Old English, **ā-, on-, of-,** and sometimes **ge.** Yet **a-** itself was much restricted in use, and employed in few new compounds.

Old English suffixes were likewise affected. The noun suffix **-els**, once belonging to our words **burial, riddle** was apparently used in making no new compounds. The idea of it as a noun ending was wholly lost by the modern period. The older **burials, riddles,** were thought plurals, and **s** (= **z**) was cut off to make our present forms. The same was true of the adverbial ending **-meal,** as in **piecemeal.** It was never employed after Middle English times, though joined to the French word **piece** in that period. These illustrate many similar losses.

There were similar losses of true compounds. The word **gold** entered two classes of compounds: those in which it merely strengthened the idea with which it was joined, and those in which it bore its ordinary meaning. Of both classes thirty-two are known for Old English, while less than half that number are found in the most complete Middle English dictionary. While the latter may not include all cases, the general tendency is fairly reflected by the example.

Not only were compounds lost entirely, they were sometimes obscured as to their separate parts. Such obscuring of compounds was due to weakening of unstressed parts, and to other phonetic changes.

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The first may be illustrated by —

daisy, once ' day's eye.'	**lord,** once ' loaf-ward.'
hussy, once ' housewife.'	**garlic,** ' spear-leek.'
lady, once ' loaf-kneader.'	**sheriff,** 'shire-reeve.'
bridal, once ' bride-feast.'	**barn,** 'barley-house.'

Examples of the second class are **darling, star-board, gossip, woman,** the first parts of which were once our words **dear, steer, God, wife.** Occasionally when such a change takes place a new compound is formed to replace the old. Thus **house-wife, life-like,** replaced **hussy, lively,** when the latter had lost their earlier meaning.

But while the language was losing some words, others were being formed. These new formations are not easily traced. A word may have been in early use and not appear in Old English literature now preserved. Yet in some cases we can see a clear extension of the word-making power. The endings **-ing** of nouns, **-y** of adjectives, and **-ly** of adverbs were more frequently used. Verbs with the suffix **l,** as **cackle, crackle, hobble,** were greatly increased in number, perhaps through Norse influence. Thus, while the vocabulary was being decreased by certain losses, it was being

increased in other ways. Doubtless the gain in the native element was greater than the loss.

MIDDLE ENGLISH BORROWING

The adoption of new words in Middle English is especially significant. Many Danish settlers were still in the country. The Norman Conquest brought a governing class which used French for a time at least. Both these influences appear in literature of the period. In fact, the adoption of new words was a common practice of the language. So many words were borrowed that complete lists can no longer be given, even of those retained in modern English. We may, however, give some idea of the kinds of words borrowed and of how their forms sometimes show their foreign origin.

Just how large was the Norse element cannot be certainly known. It was larger than at present, for many such words have been lost. But even scholars are sometimes puzzled by the similarity of Norse and native English forms. For example, it would scarcely be thought that **they, their**, are from Norse ; or that **take**, which agrees so fully in grammatical forms with **shake** and **forsake**, came from the same source. Yet the form of the first

two proves them to be borrowed, and the latter did not exist in English until after the Danish settlements. Moreover, its meaning was fully supplied by an entirely different word, now lost.

In other respects it is often not easy to determine differences. Sometimes form does not assist at all. If such words are not found in literature until the Middle period, they may still have existed in English speech before the coming of the Danes, or even in literature now lost. Or, such a word may have been less common in Old English, and brought into greater prominence by Danish usage. For example, the preposition **till** appears rarely in Old English, and never in the south. It was common in Norse, and became so in Middle English.

Again, a word may be English in form and have a meaning due to Norse usage. This seems to be true of **dream**, the form of which is English, though the only Old English meaning was 'joy.' As in Norse and Middle English it means 'a vision in sleep,' we may rightly assume that the latter sense was of Norse origin. So **earl** is English in form, but the restricted meaning of 'nobleman, ruler of a district' is Norse. These examples show

some of the difficulties besetting a study of the Norse element in our language.

Still, many common words are of Norse origin. The most certain are those having combinations of sounds which could not be strictly English. Examples are words with, —

ai, ei: bait, hail 'greet,' raid, raise, swain, they (their), wail.

sc, sk, pronounced sk: scald, scare, skill, skin, sky, score, bask, busk 'get ready.'

g as in got: get, gift, gig, gill 'of a fish,' guest, drag, egg, flag, hug, leg, log.

k: keg, kid, kilt, kirtle.

Strictly English words of the first sort would now have an ō as in no. Those of the second would have sh, as in shin, which corresponds to skin, though with altered meaning. Words of the last two classes, if of native derivation, would have y and ch respectively.

Most Norse words in English do not belong to any particular class of ideas. There are none connected with religion, since the Danes embraced English Christianity. They did not possess the throne long enough to establish a large number

of governmental words. Yet some of the latter
are important: such are **law, outlaw, earl** (a title),
ransack, originally 'to search a house.' Some
others are still used in England, as **hustings,
wapentake, riding,** 'division of the country.'
Norse words are not connected with any particu-
lar trade or occupation. Of two belonging to the
family, **sister** is Norse in form, and **husband** once
meant 'householder.'

The most numerous borrowings in Middle Eng-
lish times were from French. This is naturally
owing to the new governing class in England.
There was besides close intercourse with French
people on the continent. Finally there was a
union of portions of France in one kingdom.
The church also passed largely under French in-
fluence. Literature followed the church, when all
writers and most readers were churchmen. For a
time English and French were spoken by different
classes, and a French literature was written on
English soil.

Yet few French words immediately appeared
in native works. They crept in, a few at a time,
as a few at a time sifted into native speech. For
example, the *Saxon Chronicle*, ending nearly a cen-

tury after the Conquest, contains less than 20 common French words. The *Ormulum*, with nearly 10,000 long lines, contains less than 30 French words, not including proper names. Layamon's *Brut*, with 16,000 long lines based on a French poem, does not contain 150 words from French. In all writings before 1250 the French words probably do not exceed 500. In texts before 1400 some 3400 French words have been found, but even this is not a large number for a vocabulary of 40,000 words in the oldest period.

Borrowings from French were from more than a single dialect. The first came from Northern French, including Normandy and Picardy, while later words from Central French were introduced. In many cases words from the two districts do not differ materially, in others a difference is easily seen. For example, Northern French had **c** (= **k**) before **a** and **au,** where Central French had **ch** as in **church.**

Northern : **cage, caldron, capital, carpenter, case, catch, cattle, cause.**

Central : **change, chandler, chant (chaunt), charm, charity, chase.**

Sometimes both forms of the same word now exist side by side, as in the following pairs : —

<div style="text-align:center">

caldron–chaldron   catch–chase

capital–chapter   cattle–chattel

</div>

In other cases Northern forms were later displaced by those from Central French. So **charity, chancellor** took the place of the older **carateth, cancelere,** with the same meaning. Thus, even in Middle English times, Norman forms sometimes gave way before what was considered more correct French.

There are other signs of these two dialects of French. Thus **ch** before **e** and **i** represents Northern French, **c** (= s) in the same position, Central French. Such words as **cherish, cherry, chimney, chisel** are therefore of Northern French derivation. Northern French also are **catch** and **launch,** beside **chase** and **lance** from the Central division.

Northern French words also have **w** initially, where the corresponding Central words have **g** or **gu.** Such words are of Teutonic origin, one dialect preserving **w,** the other not. Examples are : —

Northern : **wafer, wager, war, warrior, warden, warison, warrant, reward.**

Central : **gage, guardian, guarantee, regard.**

Attempts have been made to arrange words in classes to show the kind of influence exerted by the Normans. Something may be done in this way. Many terms of government and law are of French origin. Let us set them side by side with those that are native.

English : **king, queen, lord, knight, town, alderman.**

French : **baron, countess, duke, marquis, viscount, crown, throne, prince, royal, parliament, council, scepter, rent, tax, manor, county, city, mayor.**

English : **law** (borrowed from Norse), **reeve, sheriff, theft, murder, steal.**

French : **court, judge, jury, justice, bailiff, constable, rob, felon, felony, prison, jail (gaol).**

To terms of law must be added a large number of technical words still in use. Such terms, too, are pronounced after a manner which indicates their early French origin.

The vocabulary of the church shows a similar influence. While English words were Christianized and Latin borrowings continued to be used, French words were also added. Examples are: **abbess, abbey, abbot, absolution, angel, baptize, baptist,**

chalice, canticle, cardinal, chapel, clergy, confessor, disciple, grace, hermit, idol, litany, miracle, nun, nunnery, paradise, pray, preach, prelate, prophet, prophesy, purgatory, religion, relic, sacrifice, sermon, saint, spirit, trinity.

French additions in other classes of words may be illustrated by comparison. We shall take those of (1) war, (2) names of occupations, (3) words relating to the family, and (4) those of address.

1. English: **fight, spear, sword, weapon.**
   French: **arms, armor, assault, banner, battle, fortress, lance, mail, siege, standard.**
2. English: **baker, shoemaker, smith, wagoner, weaver, wheelright.**
   French: **barber, butcher, carpenter, chandler, cutler, grocer, mason, tailor.**
3. English: **father, mother, brother, sister** (modified by Norse), **son, daughter.**
   French: **aunt, uncle, cousin, nephew, niece.**
4. English: **goodman, goodwife, gossip.**
   French: **madame, mister, mistress (miss), sir.**

Yet too much must not be made of the classes of words from any foreign source. A wrong conception of such borrowings may easily be gained.

For example, in a list of 500 French words introduced before 1250, sixty-four belong to religion and the church, twenty-eight to government and law, twelve to war and chivalry. But this leaves almost 400 which cannot be classified. Besides, the large number belonging to the church is largely due to the class of writings examined. It does not necessarily represent the speech of Englishmen.

From words fully incorporated into the speech must be separated those which belonged largely or wholly to books. These were used by translators and writers intimately acquainted with French. Such persons wrote for the learned class, and for those who learned French in the schools. To neither of these did the use of French words seem strange. But many such words found no permanent place in English, and soon disappeared even from books.

The coming of the Normans made it inevitable that French names should take root in England. Of these the most important are perhaps surnames. The English had given but one name to son or daughter, though the person might be distinguished by the addition of the father's name with the end-

ing -ing. Thus Alfred the Great was called **Ælfred Æthelwulfing**, 'Alfred son of Æthelwulf.' The Normans, on the other hand, followed the Romance custom of adding a second name to knight or courtier. This was usually from his place of birth, as 'Robert **Bruce**.' Such surnames soon became the fashion in England, as they have continued to be ever since.

The fashion of surnames soon spread among the common people. With them, too, the place of birth was not sufficiently distinctive and the name of the occupation was used. Thus 'John the **smith, baker, cook**, or **weaver**,' became **John Smith, Baker, Cook, Weaver**. These are native words, but **Taylor, Merchant, Clark**, and others are French names of occupations. It is evident that descriptive titles also became surnames. Only so can we account for such as **Long, Short, Little, Strong, Green, Smart** among native names, and **Blunt, Curtis, Merry, Petty, Russell** among those of French origin.

French influence is also responsible for a large number of given names. While **Alfred, Edward, Edith, Ethel,** are English, a large number of the commonest given names are French. Compare

Charles, Cecil, Clarence, Claude, Eugene, Francis, Frank, George, Guy, Henry, Herbert, Horace, James, John, Louis, among those for men; and Ann, Clare, Clementine, Dorothy, Emily, Frances, Grace, among those for women. Even names of more learned origin are largely French in form. Thus those of the Bible, later used so largely for given names, are frequently French in origin. Such are all those beginning with J, as John, James, Joshua, Jeremiah, and others. Classical names also appeared in French forms, as Cæsar, Cicero with c = s, and Horace, Virgil.

The Normans accepted most place-names found in England. They did introduce some, however. Examples are Montgomery and Clare among counties, and Beaumont, Beaumanoir, Highclere, Richmord, among others. Names of French places were also introduced in French forms: such are Paris, with final s, and Calais when pronounced to rime with Paris. The name 'John of Gaunt' preserves an Old French form of Ghent, where the patron of Wiclif and Chaucer was born. Other continental places often appear in French forms, as Venice, Mayence, Cologne, Florence.

In addition to the influence of French in Middle

English must be reckoned that of Latin. We have mentioned that Latin continued to be written by Englishmen. Far more was it the language of an important literature constantly used by scholars. This was not so much that of classical times, as that of mediæval writers, the Church Fathers, and the clergy. Owing to this constant use of Latin, many words from that language were introduced into English.

Yet it is not easy to separate the Latin element from the French, since Latin words were largely made French in form. For example, the Old French **aventure,** 'adventure, undertaking,' existed in Middle English in that form and in the shorter **venture,** still preserved. Soon after appears **adventure,** which must be of Latin origin as shown by the **d,** though the rest of the word is French. So **advent, adamantine** are apparently Latin, with the endings **-us, -inus** reduced to what they had become in other French words. A good many other words are also of Latin origin, though usually modified by prevailing French forms.

Among minor borrowings are those from Italy and the Low Countries. The words **ducat, florin, pilgrim,** represent Italian, though the forms are

French again.   More distinctive Italian forms, as **Cupido, Vulcano,** were used by Chaucer, but they probably never belonged to the spoken language.

Direct contact with the Low Countries belongs to an early time.   In 1260 Henry III granted protection to all German merchants, and new guilds were formed under the control of the Hanseatic League.   English wool was sent to Flanders, to be returned in woolen fabrics, or exchanged for other goods.   In 1328 Edward III married Philippa of Hainault, and about the same time invited Flemish weavers to settle in England.   Owing to these influences some Low German words were undoubtedly added to English.   Two of the commonest of these are **boy** and **groat**.   Yet the Low Country influence was not large at this time.

CHAPTER X

At the beginning of the Modern period the English vocabulary had attained the simplicity of to-day. Final unstressed **e** and many medial **e**'s of the same sort had been lost in pronunciation. As a result, words of two and three syllables were reduced to one and two respectively. Such words as **love, dove, loved, dinned**, had become monosyllables, though still written with final or medial **e** as at present. Former trisyllables like **every, neighbor**, were now dissyllables. Borrowed words had suffered similar changes. The vocabulary thus contained a large proportion of simple words.

The means of growth within the native stock were the same as in Middle English. Word composition was the most important, though compounds were not so frequently united into one word in the written form. This disguises the extent to which such composition is still carried. Even our

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dictionaries do not record many compounds actually found in literature and speech itself. Compare, for example, the wholly modern compounds of the word **life**. A few of them are **life annuity, life arrow, life rocket, life shot, life buoy, life car, life drop, life estate, life guard, life insurance, life land, life line, life rate, life rent, life school, life table**. All these are true compounds, though written with no sign of union.

Native prefixes and suffixes also continued to be used in forming new words. Some idea of the extent to which they were used may be gained by noting the foreign words to which they were freely added. The noun suffix **-dom** now appeared in such words as **dukedom, peerdom, princedom**. In Walker's *Rhyming Dictionary* there are nearly fourteen hundred nouns ending in -ness, no small part of them foreign-derived words. The adjective ending **-less** has been added to borrowed words with great freedom. Some few examples of characteristic borrowed words with this ending are **cause-less, cease-less, doubt-less, grace-less, nerve-less, sense-less, use-less**.

In a very few cases older words have split into at least two forms. Such changes are generally due

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to difference in stress, or to other phonetic causes. For such reasons, older **of, than, through, to** have split into the pairs —

of–off   than–then   through–thorough   to–too

Each of these is now an independent word, as shown by difference in use.

Another significant means of increasing the word-stock belongs to the Modern period. When words were so greatly simplified by the loss of endings, there was rarely any difference in the uninflected forms of nouns, adjectives, and verbs. For this reason it was easy to use one part of speech for another, as noun for adjective, or *vice versa*, and either for a verb. The result was the virtual increase of each of these classes of words.

This increase will be clear from some examples. The older language had a noun **loan,**[1] a verb **lend,** and a noun **lender** from the verb. In the Modern period the noun **loan** became a verb, and from it was made a new noun **loaner.** The noun **loan** was also used as a virtual adjective in such compounds as **loan agent.** Similarly the noun **board,** 'plank, table,'

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[1] Possibly the verb was earlier borrowed from Norse, but the common use is modern, and the noun **loaner** certainly so.

developed a verb **board,** 'go on ship,' and a noun **boarder,** 'one who boards,' from the first meaning. From the second also developed a verb **board,** ' to take meals,' and noun **boarder,** 'one who takes meals.' The noun **board** is used as an adjective in such compounds as **board walk.** The increase in vocabulary by this simple means can scarcely be overestimated.

Somewhat akin to this free use of one part of speech for another is another change that affected certain words. The lack of inflection of the adjective made it easily possible for the adjective to be used as a noun. From such frequent use, some adjectives even assumed the plural **s** of nouns, and so became new nouns. Examples are **betters, commons, elders, necessaries, particulars, sweets, vegetables.**

Like the use of a word in new function is the extension of meaning which has come in Modern English. When a word acquires a new meaning, the vocabulary is increased just as truly as if a new word had been coined or borrowed. Such extension of meaning within the Modern period has been very great. By such processes, too, the expressiveness of English has kept pace with the

broadening and deepening of English thought and feeling.

BORROWING IN MODERN ENGLISH

The borrowing of words in the Modern period has been far greater than in any that has preceded. French and Latin were still drawn upon. Contact with many other nations brought each its quota. There have been special times when these influences have been unusually strong. The establishment of printing in England gave a new impulse to the translation of French and Latin books. With translation many new words came into literary usage. The revival of learning in the sixteenth century also hastened new borrowings from Latin.

A further French influence appears in the seventeenth century. Then Charles I married the daughter of Henry IV of France, and French manners were much imitated in England. Such French influence was even stronger in the reign of Charles II, as the latter had been brought up at the French court. Even literature was greatly affected by French models.

French words borrowed in the seventeenth century often show their origin by accent on the last

syllable. Such are **adroit, bagatelle, brunette, burlesque, cadet, cajole, campaign, caprice, caress, chagrin, coquette.** The same is usually true of later French words. These have been occasionally introduced by writers, more often by philosophers, scientists, and critics of art and literature. It is not easy to estimate this later French element. It is probably larger than from any other single source, unless possibly the Latin of scientific usage.

During the sixteenth century direct contact with Italy, Spain, and Portugal brought some words from those sources. Then Englishmen often traveled as far as Italy, and Italian literature was commonly read and translated. Such influence continued into the following century. In the eighteenth, too, Italian music was brought to England, and with it many musical terms. Some characteristic Italian words direct from Italy are **archipelago, balcony, campanile, catacomb, dilettante, extravaganza, piano, piazza.** Many others have come through French.

In Elizabethan times Spanish literature came to be known in England. There was also more direct contact with Spain through diplomacy and commerce. Later still, travel in Spain was not uncom-

mon, while there was also contact with Spanish as
spoken in the Americas. Examples of words direct
from Spanish are—

alcalde (originally Arabic), **castanets, hidalgo, mat-
ador ;**
articles of merchandise, as **indigo, sassafras, sherry,
vanilla ;**
nautical terms, as **armada, flotilla ;**
names of animals, as **alligator, armadillo, mosquito ;**
abstract terms, as **punctilio, peccadillo.**

The Portúguese element is naturally not so large
as the Spanish. Yet there have been important
commercial relations with Portugal or its colonies.
A few such Portuguese words are **auto-da-fé, ba-
nana, cobra, cocoa.** Other Portuguese words are
from India, Africa, and Brazil, — countries settled
by the Portuguese or trading with them.

To Middle English words of Low German origin
some have been added in the Modern period. These
belong to two classes, — those connected with com-
merce and with nautical affairs. The first includes
cannikin, guilder, hogshead, holland, jerkin, link
'torch,' **linstock, spool, swabber, wagon.** To the sec-
ond belong such words as **ahoy, aloof, avast, boom,**

deck, hoist, lash, lighter 'barge', yacht, yawl. Both classes have come to England because of the close relations with the Low Countries in commerce and shipping interests.

Some few borrowings have also come from High German and the Scandinavian languages. From the former are certain terms of mineralogy, a science early developed in Germany. Such are **bismuth, blende, cobalt, gneiss, quartz, shale, zinc.** Commercial relations are responsible for **meerschaum, fuchsia, spruce-beer.** From modern Scandinavian tongues come such words as **eider, geysir, sloyd, tungsten.**

Borrowing from the more remote languages has resulted from wide travel, and the extended colonial relations of Englishmen. Even during Middle English some such words had entered England, but usually through other languages. In modern times, words of direct importation from India are **chintz, juggernaut, jungle.** From Persia come **bazaar, borax, caravan, divan.** Of Balto-Slavic origin are **Czar, drosky, knout, mazurka, polka, ukase, vampire.**

Words from Hebrew began to come very early through translations of the Scriptures. As these translations were made more directly from Latin

and Greek versions, we may regard practically all Hebrew words as direct borrowings from those languages. Such are **alleluia, amen, balsam, cherub, cummin, ephod, gopher** (wood), **paschal.** Of Arabic origin in modern times are **alkali, alkoran, attar, harem, hashish.** There are also many names, as **emir, fellah, moslem, sheik.** Turkish borrowings are **bashaw, bey, bosh, caftan, Cossack, dey, janizary, ottoman.**

Other remote countries furnish small groups of words. From Hungary come such as **hussar, saber, shako**; from Tartary, **khan, mammoth.** Malay words are **amuck, cockatoo, gong, guttapercha, junk.** From China come **tea,** and names of various kinds of tea; from Australia, **boomerang, kangaroo**; from Polynesia, **taboo, tattoo** 'to mark the body'; from Africa, **behemoth, oasis, gypsy.**

The largest of the minor borrowed elements is the native American. This is from the languages of the original inhabitants of North and South America. From the North American Indians come **hominy, moccasin, moose, opossum, papoose, pemmican, raccoon, sachem, squaw, toboggan, tomahawk, wampum, wigwam.** Mexico has furnished **cacao, chocolate, copal, coyote, jalap, tomato.** The West

Indies have added **barbecue, canoe, hurricane, maize, potato.** To American English, especially, has been added a large number of place-names from this same source.

The aboriginal languages of South America have naturally furnished fewer words. Some from this source are **alpaca, caoutchouc, condor, guano, ipecacuanha, jaguar, pampas, quinine, tapioca, tapir.** Some of these have been introduced directly, as names of animals and articles of merchandise. Others have come through other modern languages.

Most borrowed words so far noted belong to speech as well as literature. There has been, in addition, a considerable borrowing of learned words seldom found in ordinary books. These are especially terms of philosophy, mathematics, and the natural sciences. The nomenclature of the latter has been revolutionized within a century and a half. Many such words have been borrowed from French, while many others have been coined directly from Latin or Greek.

Not alone has the English vocabulary been largely increased by borrowing of words from various sources. Formative elements, as prefixes and suffixes, have also been adopted and used ex-

tensively. Examples of such borrowed prefixes are **ante-, anti-, bi-, dis-, ex-, inter-, non-, re-, semi-, sub-, super-, trans-, ultra-**. They are found in such words as **anteroom, anti-American, bicycle, dislike, ex-sheriff, intertwist, nonconductor, renew, semiweekly, subway, supercharge, transform, ultraclerical**. The union of many of these with native words shows that they have a living value to-day.

Borrowed suffixes are more numerous. Those forming nouns are **-age, -ard, -ess, -ist, -let, -ment, -ry,** as in **tillage, drunkard, murderess, nihilist, patriotism, brooklet, fulfillment, outlawry**. Adjective suffixes are **-an, -ate, -able, -ese, -esque, -ic, -ide,** as in **Elizabethan, nitrate, eatable, Johnsonese, Dantesque, Celtic, bromide**. Common verb suffixes are **-fy, -ize,** as in **purify, galvanize**.

The incoming of new words at various times has had one curious result. The same word etymologically has sometimes been introduced in two, three, or even four different forms. Thus **caitiff, conceit, corpse, frail,** are older forms of **captive, conception, corps, fragile**. Some doublets of a similar sort have also been mentioned on page 136, but there are many others. Of Greek origin, though coming through other languages, are **diamond–ada-**

mant. From Hebrew are **balm–balsam**. Examples of three forms of the same word are —

real–royal–regal   **leal–loyal–legal**

Even four have come at different times from Latin **discus**, while the latter is also a part of English. This one word, therefore, appears in five forms, — **dish, desk, dais, disc, discus**.

Sometimes a later borrowing displaced an earlier. Thus French **angel** displaced Old English **engel**, both from Latin **angelus**. So Old English **fic, sanct**, from Latin **ficus, sanctus**, were replaced by the French **fig, saint**. Old English **Cristen**, 'Christian,' has been made to conform to the Latin **Christianus**, though the verb **christen** has been influenced only in the spelling with **ch**. In some other cases the spelling only has been altered. Examples are **debt, doubt**, altered from older **dette, doute**, though without change in pronunciation. Double forms due to the same cause are **cord–chord, counter–compter, indite–indict, quire–choir, rime–rhyme**. In each of these pairs the first form is the older.

As to meaning, borrowed verbs have usually been those having no exact equivalents in the language. Words, that is, have followed new things

or new ideas when these have themselves been borrowed. If a borrowed word were synonymous with a native word, or fairly so, one of them has been lost or modified in meaning. Language, as De Quincey says, tends to rid itself of synonyms. More exactly, language uses fairly synonymous words for different purposes. By this process, also, the language has been still further enriched.

Such distinction in meaning between native and borrowed words is illustrated by the conversation of Wamba and Gurth in Scott's *Ivanhoe*. The jester there shows how English **swine** became French **pork** on the table of the Norman; how **ox** became **beef, calf** became **veal,** and he might have added, **sheep** and **deer** became **mutton** and **venison.**[1] There are many similar differentiations between English and borrowed words. Examples are the pairs, —

stool–chair	board–table
bed–couch	limb–member
luck–fortune	work–labor
mild–gentle	wretched–miserable

[1] The enmity between the races pictured by Scott really belongs to an earlier time than that of *Ivanhoe*. Compare what has been said of the fusion of English and Normans on p. 28 f. The use

Borrowing of words has been variously regarded at different times. Elizabethan purists bewailed the 'corruption' of the language. The same view has sometimes been taken in later ages. Yet borrowed words, once thoroughly incorporated into a language, are as much a part of it as those of native origin. Both classes get their standing and value wholly from usage. The word newly coined from the native stock, or newly borrowed from a foreign source, acquires its value in the same way. The real advantage of a native coinage is that it may be more easily understood and more readily accepted. So far the native stock is always to be preferred to words which seem in any sense foreign.

On the other hand, early borrowings have been adopted and simplified as fully as native words. They are therefore as clear and forcible. Compare, for simplicity, the monosyllables **ache, age, art, aunt, bail, balm, bar, base, beak, beast, beef, blame, boil, brace, branch, bray, breeze, brief, brush**. Yet these are but a few of many from early French.

of French words for dressed meats is natural, owing to the greater attention of the Normans to the culinary art.

The full assimilation of such words to English is shown also by the manner in which they enter into compounds. In **black-guard, life-guard, salt-cellar,** the first part is English and the second French. In **eyelet-hole, heir-loom, hobby-horse, scape-goat,** the order of the elements is exactly reversed. So borrowed words with native prefixes are **a-round, be-cause, fore-front, out-cry, over-power, un-able.** Some with similar suffixes are **aim-less, court-ship, duke-dom, dainti-ness, false-hood, genial-ly plenti-ful, trouble-some.**

Much has been made of numerical relations of the two elements. As to this, different results may be obtained by different methods of computation. If the words of the dictionary are counted, the number of those borrowed will be far in excess of the native. In this way a native word that may be used a dozen times in a paragraph counts no more than a word which the ordinary speaker rarely or never uses. Even if we count the words introducing new ideas the borrowed element in any late writing may be large. But if we estimate words as actually used in speaking or writing, giving credit to each word as often as it occurs, the native element will be far in excess of the borrowed.

Some idea of such percentages of each class may be gained from the following table:—

	Native	Foreign		Native	Foreign
Spenser	86	14	Pope	80	20
Shakespeare	90	10	Johnson	72	28
Bible (three			Hume	73	27
gospels)	94	6	Gibbon	70	30
Milton	81	19	Macaulay (Bacon		
Addison	82	18	Essay)	75	25
Swift	75	25	Tennyson	88	12

In other kinds of literature the percentages would be different. Works of science, philosophy, and technical treatises naturally show the largest percentage of borrowed words. But the latter are as valuable in their place as the former. Such a language as English is not a hodgepodge in its word-stock, but wonderfully expressive in all realms of thought and feeling.

IV

SIMPLIFICATION OF ENGLISH INFLECTIONS

CHAPTER XI

INFLECTIONAL LEVELING

In a previous part we have shown how words have been simplified by changes in sounds and by losses of unstressed elements. We have also seen how they were sometimes modified by the influence called analogy. We are now to see how both causes entered more largely in simplifying inflectional forms once belonging to the language.

The languages of the Indo-European family, including English, were once highly inflected. In all, too, the inflections have been more or less simplified. For example, there were once eight caseforms for nouns, adjectives, and pronouns. There were also three numbers for nouns, adjectives, pronouns, and verbs. There were several different declensions for nouns and adjectives. There were

numerous inflectional forms of the verb, and several conjugations for different classes of verbs. Even Latin had lost two case-forms, the dual number, and certain inflectional forms of verbs. The Romance languages show a still greater simplification. The Teutonic languages have had a similar development, and English has gone further than some others of the group.

The extent to which English inflections have been simplified may be briefly summarized. In Old English all nouns had three different case-forms in the plural, and two or three in the singular.[1] There were also several declensions for nouns, and two for each adjective. The inflectional endings of verbs were numerous, and there were several conjugations.

At the present time most nouns are declined alike. They have one common case-form for the older nominative, vocative, dative, and accusative, and another for the genitive singular. They have a common spoken form for all the plural, though the written form of the genitive is indicated by an

[1] Note the distinction between *case-form* and case in a syntactical sense. Of the latter it is convenient to reckon five or even six for Old English.

M

apostrophe. Adjectives have no inflection. Personal pronouns alone preserve case-forms, while demonstratives have different plurals only. Most verbs have but four inflectional forms, a few five. So largely have the simplifying influences been effective.

The simplifying influences are the two already mentioned,—phonetic change and analogy. The first has been particularly strong upon inflectional endings, because they have always been unstressed in English. On the latter account such syllables were easily weakened and lost. For example, every final unstressed **m** became **n**. Every unstressed **a, o,** and u became **e**. Final **n,** and later final **e,** regularly disappeared.

The second influence was even more important. It has brought simplicity by emphasizing regularity and uniformity. More common forms have tended to replace the less common, more regular the less regular. The tendency which makes the child say **man–mans, good–gooder, give–gived,** has prevailed in a multitude of similar forms. A declension with a larger number of nouns has influenced one with a smaller number. A form common to two or more cases has affected that found only in one.

Not only number of forms, but frequency of usage has been influential. The vocative, far less frequent than the nominative, had lost its separate form in Old English. The accusative, which occurs more frequently than the nominative in nouns, often replaced the latter. In personal and some other pronouns the dative was the more frequent, and it replaced the accusative. In verbs, the third person has been more influential than the first or second. On the other hand, certain strong verbs, owing to far more frequent use, have withstood to some extent the regularizing influences of the weak.

With such forces at work in English it is unnecessary to assume foreign influences as affecting inflections. Simplification had begun in Old English before foreign influences were important. In Middle English the language assumed its modern form in localities which show least foreign influence. Besides, such simplification has taken place in other Teutonic languages little affected from without, as in Dutch and Danish. The real effect of foreign influence was in decreasing the use of English in literature and the schools. As a result, conservative influences were less active, and speech itself was more readily followed.

There is not a single inflection of the modern tongue which may not be fully accounted for as a direct descendant of native forms. A few apparent exceptions, the pronouns **they, their,** and certain French plurals of adjectives in a few phrases, will be discussed in their place. On the other hand, borrowed words, with the rarest exceptions, have fully assumed native inflections. This could not have been true if the foreign influence was as great as sometimes supposed.

Such inflectional leveling as has taken place should not be regarded as unfortunate. We have refrained from using such terms as 'decay' or 'breaking down of inflections,' lest they should give a wrong impression. Simplification has been a natural change in all members of the Indo-European family. Nor has there been any loss of expressive power. With simplification of inflections there have come other means of expressing thought, so that there has been no permanent loss. English, German, French, Italian, Spanish are as expressive in analytic forms as Latin or Greek with their fuller inflections.

It must be remembered that all changes have been brought about in the most gradual manner.

There is no sharp line between the forms of different periods. Yet inflectional simplification may best be considered in respect to the three periods of our language history. Old English may be regarded as the period of full inflections. Middle English is the time when inflections were leveled. Modern English represents lost inflections, or the analytic stage. Yet in the following chapters we shall carry each part of speech through the three periods. This will be more convenient, since our special purpose is to explain Modern English forms.

Throughout these chapters we shall also consider the development of Midland English. That is most important, since Midland English lies at the base of the modern tongue. Even in Old English the Anglian dialect, belonging to the same Midland region, suffered more rapid changes than West Saxon. At the beginning of the Middle period, therefore, it was somewhat nearer Modern English than the language of the South.

CHAPTER XII

THE NOUN

OLD English nouns belonged to two large classes, called strong and weak. Strong nouns were of several varieties, but practically of three principal forms according to gender. Gender, too, was grammatical, as in Latin or German, and not dependent on sex as at present. Strong masculines and neuters were alike in all forms but one, the nominative accusative plural, and were thus closely associated. Weak nouns were masculine and feminine, only two neuters remaining. In addition to these two large classes there were some few irregular nouns. Some of these are still preserved, but they will be treated by themselves.

The principal inflections of Old English nouns may be represented by some words very like their modern equivalents. These are **dōm,** now 'doom,' **word** 'word,' **clif** 'cliff,' **glōf** 'glove,' **lufu** 'love,' **oxa** 'ox,' **heorte** 'heart.' These are placed in two groups, according to their subsequent develop-

ment. The first contains strong masculines and neuters, the second strong feminines and weak nouns.

I

	Masc.	Neut.	
Sg. N. V. A.[1]	dōm	word	clif
G.	dōmes	wordes	clifes
D. I.	dōme	worde	clife
Pl. N. V. A.	dōmas	word	clifu
G.	dōma	worda	clifa
D. I.	dōmum	wordum	clifum

II

	Fem.		Masc.	Fem.
Sg. N. V.	glōf	lufu	oxa	heorte
G. D. A. I.	glōfe	lufe	oxan	heortan
Pl. N. V. A.	glōfa(e)	lufa(e)	oxan	heortan
G.	glōfa(ena)	lufa(ena)	oxena	heortena
D. I.	glōfum	lufum	oxum	heortum

If we examine these declensions closely, we may see how they were likely to develop, owing to similarity of forms and frequency of use. Thus those of the first declension agreed in all but one form. The N. V. A. plurals were different. As

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[1] The abbreviations mean nominative, vocative, accusative, genitive, dative, instrumental (Latin ablative). The last is important syntactically, but differs from the dative only in adjectives and a few pronouns. The vocative never differs from the nominative, and may be disregarded. Forms in parentheses are less common.

all other forms were the same, these also became practically one by the beginning of the following period.

Nouns of the second declension fall into two groups, in each of which there is agreement in all forms except the N. V. singular and plural. The two groups were also similar in their G. D. A. I. singulars, their D. plurals, and often in their G. plurals in -ena. There was thus strong basis for regularization of these nouns, and this also took place by Middle English times.

In both cases phonetic and analogical changes assisted the union. First final **m** became **n** in the dative plurals. Every unstressed **a** and **u** became **e**. Final **n** was gradually lost in all cases. By analogy, also, the genitive in -es of the first declension was extended to most nouns of the second. At the same time the N. A. plural in -as, reduced to -es, became the common plural of all but a few nouns. Finally the dative singular was gradually replaced by the nominative-accusative.

By these changes the two declensions were reduced in early Middle English to the following simple forms. Grammatical gender also disappeared.

	I	II
Sg. N. V. A.	dōm	lufe (luve)[1]
G.	dōmes	lufes [luve]
D.	dōm [dōme]	lufe
Pl. (all cases)	dōmes	lufes

The significant difference between these two declensions is the final **e** of the stem in words under II. The forms in brackets are rare. The genitive in **-e** of the second declension is mainly confined to certain groups which are practically compounds. Examples of the latter are **herte blood** 'heart blood,' **chirche door** 'church door,' **Ladye day** 'Lady day.' The dative in **-e** of declension I was also gradually restricted to certain phrases, and did not commonly appear after the early part of the period.

During Middle English further phonetic and analogical changes took place. Final **e** was gradually lost. At first this occurred before words beginning with a vowel or weak **h,** and later in all cases. Final unstressed **s** became a **z**-sound in late Middle English. The **e** of the **-es** ending was then lost except after **s, z, sh, ch,** and **j** sounds. When

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[1] Medial **f**, pronounced **v** even in Old English, was gradually replaced by the latter letter. Bracketed forms were fast disappearing.

e of the -**es** ending was lost, the final **z**-sound again became **s** after voiceless consonants, that is, after **t, p, k, f, th**.

These few changes bring us to the modern forms. These are in general declined alike, though such a statement is strictly true for the written form only. In speech there are three classes of Modern English nouns, as follows : —

		I		II	III		
Sg. N. V. A. D.		boy	lad	rat	horse	fish	church
G.		boy's	lad's	rat's	horse's	fish's	church's
Pl. N. V. A. D.		boys	lads	rats	horses	fishes	churches
G.		boys'	lads'	rats'	horses'	fishes'	churches'

Nouns of class I end in a vowel or voiced consonant, and hence add the **z**-sound in genitive singular and the plural. Those of the second class end in a voiceless consonant and add the **s**-sound. Those of the third represent nouns ending in an **s, z, sh, ch,** or **j** sound, and these add the syllable -**ez** (**iz**), written **es**.

We have added above the apostrophe of the written form, though of course it has no place in the spoken. In the latter, the genitive singular and the whole plural are pronounced exactly alike. The apostrophe began to be used as the sign of

an omitted letter in the seventeenth century. It was not regularly part of the noun inflection until the eighteenth century. After it came to be used in the genitive singular, it was added to the s of the genitive plural. The apostrophe is actually misleading in such words of class III as **fish, church,** since in these the genitive singular has an added syllable as truly as the plural.

From the above scheme there are few divergences, except in certain plurals to be considered later. Nouns ending in **s** sometimes form the genitive singular by the addition of the apostrophe only. This irregularity is very old. In Middle English, foreign words ending in **s** did not always assume inflectional -**es** in either genitive or plural. This was especially true when the following word began with **s.** Certain phrases of this sort still remain, as ' **Jesus**' sake,' ' **conscience**' sake.' Polysyllables often follow this form, as in ' **Achilles**' wrath.' The older form is also preserved in poetry. Purists, however, insist on writing '**s** even in these cases. The shorter form, while irregular in one sense, fully corresponds to that of speech.

In early Modern English, especially after final

s, his was often used to express the genitive. This was probably from a misunderstanding of the origin of that form. Under the influence of this notion, her was sometimes added after feminine nouns. Compare Ben Jonson's 'Sejanus his Fall' and Bacon's 'Venus her glass.' Such expressions may possibly have been influenced by the sort of emphasis given when the pronoun subject is repeated after the noun. Compare such illiterate English as 'John he said.'

The genitive ending is added only to the last word of a syntactical group. Compare 'Edward the Confessor's crown,' 'Jones and Thompson's store,' 'the man in the moon's thornbush.' For purposes of inflection the whole group is treated as a single word. This is one of the most convenient devices of our modern analytic tongue.

With the loss of distinctive endings for gender, natural gender based on sex became a necessity. Gender in Modern English is therefore logical, not grammatical. Even suffixes lost their gender relations. Thus -er, once masculine, now signifies simple agency. So -ster, the corresponding feminine, soon lost all idea of sex relation. This is shown by such words as tapster, huckster, gamester.

Spinster remains feminine in meaning, but with no relation to a masculine **spinner.**

The only feminine suffix of the modern language is **-ess,** of French origin. In **songstress, seamstress** it has been added to original feminines in **-ster,** after the latter had lost the notion of sex. Otherwise gender in English is expressed by different words, as **father–mother.** Sometimes one of the pair is a borrowing, as **countess, bachelor**; sometimes both are borrowed, as **uncle–aunt** from French. Of much later introduction are such borrowed pairs, as **executor–executrix, sultan–sultana.**

Irregular Plurals

Side by side with the normal development of most nouns there have continued to exist a few relics of older inflection. For example, Old English neuters with long stems (see **word** in the table, p. 167), and some other nouns had no ending in the N. V. A. plural. Most such words were gradually regularized, but a few remain, as **deer, sheep, swine.** Others are found only in certain expressions, as **night** in **fortnight, month** in 'a **twelvemonth.**' Like these, though probably under the influence of collective and abstract nouns, those denoting meas-

ure sometimes remain unchanged in the plural after numerals. Such are **brace, bushel, dozen, foot, mile, ton**.

A few words ending in **f** or **th** still have plurals in **v** and voiced **th**, as **wife, bath**. In such words final **f, th** were once voiced before any vocalic ending in singular or plural. Such words have been regularized in the singular, except **calf** in compounds like **calveshead,** and most words in the plural. To the few that retain older plurals one borrowed word, **beef–beeves,** has been added. Of words with final **s**, which once became a **z**-sound in a similar way, only **house** is left.

One word, **oxen,** and the poetic **eyen** represent Old English plurals in **-an**, Middle English **-en**. This ending has been extended, however, to several to which it did not originally belong, as **brethren, children, kine** (from **ki-en**). All these irregularities were naturally more numerous in earlier times, as in the early Modern period.

A few plurals with vowels different from the singular also exist, as **man–men**. Such mutation of the vowel was not a sign of number in Old English, but became so later. Other mutations are shown in **foot–feet, mouse–mice**. Like the last,

archaic **kine** is a mutated plural of **cow,** to which -en (ne) was later added. The older plural **brethren** shows mutation and added -en, while **brothers** is the usual form to-day. Another irregular plural, **childer,** still sometimes heard, has become **childr-en** by analogy of **brethren.**

A few words have two plurals, an older and later form, as **dice-dies** from **die,** and **pence-pennies** from **penny.** The so-called change of **y** to **ies** in plurals is an irregularity of the written form only. The older **ie,** once found in both singular and plural, was retained in the latter, while it became **y** in the former. So plurals in **oes** for words ending in **o,** as **negroes, potatoes,** are by analogy of such older words as **foes, hoes.** Late words ending in **o** usually form their plurals in **s** only.

The single genitive ending for a group of words has been mentioned. A similar plural of a group also exists, as **forget-me-nots, four-percents, two-by-fours.** In a group of noun and modifying element, the noun alone takes the plural sign, whether before or after its modifier. Examples are 'the Smith **brothers,**' 'tooth-**brushes,**' 'sons-in-law,' '**hangers** on,' '**states** general,' 'the **Misses** Smith.' The former class of plurals affects the latter, how-

ever, and such plurals as 'court martials,' 'the Miss Smiths' are often heard. Compounds with man, woman, pluralize both words, as men folks, women writers.

There are a few phrases in which an Old French adjective retains its s plural beside the English noun, as lords lieutenants. Such forms probably never belonged to popular speech, and exist mainly in literature or in more formal court language of England. Only in late times have foreign plurals been adopted with their singulars. Such are formula–formulæ, index–indices. The tendency of the language is to rid itself of these foreign plurals, or to establish a regular form beside the irregular. Compare the new plural indexes beside older indices.

CHAPTER XIII

THE ADJECTIVE

One peculiarity of the adjective in Old English, as in all Teutonic languages, was its double declension under different circumstances. The first of these agreed in general with the forms of strong nouns. The second, regularly used after a demonstrative pronoun, took in the main the forms of the weak nouns. The complications of this scheme may be sufficiently seen from the noun forms already given. For this reason we shall not here give a table of the Old English adjective.

The leveling of inflections in late Old English was very complete for the adjective. Even in early Middle English all oblique case-forms had disappeared. This left only the distinction of singular and plural. The second declension of the adjective, called weak, was also largely leveled. Only adjectives not ending in unstressed **e** added this vowel in the singular weak form. The Middle English adjective thus had the following simple forms: —

	Strong	**Weak**	**Strong and Weak**
Singular,	gōd 'good'	gōde	grēne 'green'
Plural,	gōde	gōde	grēne

The disappearance of final **e**, as already described in nouns, left the adjective without inflection as to-day. A few relics of older usage remain. An old genitive plural, **aller (alder)**, occurs in Chaucer. Shakespeare also used one of its compounds, **alder-liefest**, 'dearest of all.' The French plural of a few adjectives in certain phrases has been mentioned on page 176. There is no evidence, however, that such forms were a part of living speech. The adjectives **an (a)** and **the** will be discussed under the words from which they are derived.

COMPARISON

The Old English endings of comparisons were **-ra** and **-ost (est)**. These became **-re (er)** and **-est** in Middle English, and **er, -est** in the Modern period. Beside the prevailing forms were certain less regular ones in the older language. Thus there were comparatives and superlatives with mutation, as earlier **strong–strenger–strengest**. Most of these were regularized, but **elder–eldest** are mutated forms of **old**.

Better–best and **less–least** are similar mutations of forms not preserved in the positive.

A few original superlatives with an -m suffix were first regularized by adding -est. Afterward this -**mest** ending was made -**most** by influence of the adverb **most**. Examples are **foremost, hindmost, inmost, outmost**. Similarly, comparatives which had lost comparative meaning were extended. Examples are **furthermore–furthermost, uttermore–uttermost**. **Former** is a comparative based on an earlier superlative. The older comparison of **near** was **nigh–near–next**. The comparative then became positive, and the modern forms **near–nearer–nearest** were made.

Double forms of comparison, like those of **old**, now belong to **far**, as **farther–farthest, further–furthest**. The latter is the older and did not belong to **far** at all. It became associated in meaning with **far**, and under its influence the new forms were made. Comparison with **more** and **most** began in Middle English. It perhaps came to be used by analogy of these adverbs with participles and words not strictly allowing comparison. Afterward they became the regular form for polysyllabic adjectives.

NUMERALS

All numerals are now adjectives, though some of them were nouns in Old English. Then also the first three were regularly inflected, **one** even in the plural with the meaning 'alone, only.' Like adjectives, numerals have lost all inflection. The indefinite article **an** (a with loss of final **n**) is a weakened form of **one** when it existed in the older form **ān**. Double forms with loss of **n** as in **an** (a) are the negative **none** (no), 'not one.' Our word **one** is a second weakened form from Middle English **ǭn**, 'one.' The regular development of OE. **ān** appears with long **o** in **only, alone, atone**.

The numerals **two, three** had plural forms for all genders. The neuter nominative-accusatives remain in the modern forms. In addition the masculine of the first is found in **twain**, and of the second in **thri-ce, thir-ty, thir-teen**. The root of the first is also part of **be-tween, be-twixt**. The remaining cardinals are natural developments of their earlier forms, so far as they belonged to English. Such large numerals as **million, billion, trillion** were borrowed from French.

Of the ordinals, French **second** has displaced

older **other** in this use. **Fifth, sixth, twelfth** have assumed **th** in place of earlier **t** by analogy of the more common forms, as **fourth, eighth. Seventh, ninth, eleventh, thirteenth** to **nineteenth,** have been modified in their stems by influence of the cardinals. The ending **th** has also been extended to the higher cardinals, formerly not used in ordinal form, as **hundredth, thousandth.**

Multiplicatives formed by the suffix **-fold** are of Old English origin. The terms **double, treble, triple,** and the suffix **-ply,** are from French. The older form of the distributive, as **two and two,** has now usually become **two by two.**

CHAPTER XIV

PRONOUNS

THE pronouns have this special interest that some of them have suffered fewer losses than other words. In Old English they possessed the only relic of a dual number. In the Modern period some of them have preserved three case-forms, where nouns have kept but two. We may best consider them in the several classes to which they belong.

PERSONAL PRONOUNS

In Old English the personal pronouns had the following forms: —

		FIRST	SECOND	THIRD MASC.	THIRD NEUT.	THIRD FEM.
Sg.	N.	ic	ðū	hē	hit	hīo, hēo
	G.	mīn	ðīn	his		hiere (hire)
	D. I.	mē	ðē	him		hiere (hire)
	A.	mē (mec)	ðē (ðec)	hiene	hit	hīe (hī)
Du.	N.	wit	git			
	G.	uncer	incer			
	D. I.	unc	inc			
	A.	unc (uncit)	inc (incit)			
Pl.	N.	wē	gē			hīe (hī)
	G.	ūre (ūser)	ēower (īower)			hiera (hira, heora)
	D. I.	ūs	ēow (īow)			him (heom)
	A.	ūs (ūsic)	ēow (ēowic)			hīe (hī)

These forms were greatly reduced in late Old and early Middle English. In the first two the dual entirely disappeared. The dative-accusative became one by the loss of the older accusative. The last was also true of the third personal pronoun, except that the neuter accusative **hit** displaced the dative, leaving **him** as masculine only. This was due to the fact that the nominative and accusative of the neuter were alike. At the same time a more distinctive feminine nominative **she**, from an old demonstrative, began to appear, and plural forms from a similar source. The latter **they, their, theim (them)**, from Norse forms of the demonstrative, finally replaced the older plural entirely, except perhaps for the dialectal **'em** from older **hem.**

Other changes followed. The first person singular lost its final consonant and became **I**. In the second person plural the initial consonant, now **y**, was extended to all forms. The plural **ye, you,** which had begun to be used for the singular in ceremonious address, replaced the singular forms. Then the dative-accusative **you** displaced the nominative, owing to more frequent use. The form **ye**, with the older singulars **thou, thine, thee,** have remained in poetry and liturgical language. In the

third person **hit** lost its **h**, and in Modern English
its was formed by analogy, leaving **his** as masculine
only. Thus the pronouns assumed their present
forms.

REFLEXIVES

Old English used the personal pronouns as re-
flexives, and this usage continued in Middle and
early Modern English. While this was going on,
the dative-accusative was strengthened by the in-
tensive **self**. This gave such forms as **himself, it-
self, ourselves**, the latter with the noun plural in s.
Like these, **myself, thyself** were originally dative-
accusative, but were modified by analogy of **my,
thy**.

POSSESSIVES

Old English possessives were formed from geni-
tives of the first two personal pronouns, and for
the third person from an old reflexive stem. All
were inflected like adjectives. In Middle English
the third personal possessive disappeared, and two
new ones (**his, her**) were formed from the genitives
of the third personal pronoun. As already noted,
its is a Modern English coinage.

In Middle English, also, possessives, like adjec-
tives, lost all inflection. At the same time final

n disappeared from **mine, thine,** giving **my, thy,**
except when used without a following noun, or
absolutely. By analogy of **his** and noun genitives,
the possessives assumed s when used absolutely.
This brought them to their modern forms **my,
mine; thy, thine; our, ours; your, yours; his, its;
her, hers; their, theirs.**

Demonstratives

The two most important demonstrative pronouns
in Old English were declined as follows. They
have, it will be seen, separate dative and instru-
mental forms.

	Masc.	Neut.	Fem.	Masc.	Neut.	Fem.
			Singular			
N.	sē	ðæt	sēo	ðēs	ðis	ðēos
G.	ðæs		ðǣre	ðises		ðisse
D. I.	ðǣm (ðām)		ðǣre	ðiosum (ðissum)		ðisse
A.	ðone	ðæt	ðā	ðiosne (ðisne)	ðis	ðās
I.	ðȳ, ðon			ðȳs, ðīs		
			Plural			
N. A.	ðā			ðās		
G.	ðāra (ðǣra)			ðissa		
D. I.	ðǣm (ðām)			ðiossum (ðissum)		

The inflections of the demonstratives, like those
of adjectives, disappeared in Middle English times.
The neuters **that** and **this,** with somewhat irregular

plurals **those** and **these**, became our modern representatives. The masculine **se**, modified to **the** by the prevailing initial consonant, remains as our indefinite article. The feminine **seo** became **she**, and supplied a new nominative for the feminine of the third personal pronoun.

The masculine dative is found in one expression 'for **the nonce**.' This was earlier 'for **then** ones,' in which **then** represents older **ðæm**, and **ones** is based on **one**. 'The **tother**' preserves a weakened form of **that** (**thet**), with final **t** transferred to the following word. In '**the** more **the** better' and similar expressions, **the** is the old instrumental slightly modified. A Middle English **thise**, an older plural of **this**, occurs in such an expression as 'this hundred years.'

A third demonstrative of Old English, **yon**, is still heard occasionally. Compare Shakespeare's '**yon** stranger.' Otherwise, the adverb **yonder** is the only relic of it. A pronoun of identity, **ilk**, is now known in the phrase 'of that **ilk**.' The manner in which the intensive pronoun **self** became a part of the reflexives has been mentioned. It also entered into noun compounds, as **self-help**, **self-will**.

INTERROGATIVES

The simple interrogative in Old English had but one form for both numbers, and but two for gender. It was inflected as below : —

	MASC.-FEM.	NEUT.
N.	hwā	hwæt
G.	hwæs	
D.	hwǣm (hwām)	
A.	hwone	hwæt
I.		hwȳ

Of these, **who, whose, whom** have remained in a personal sense, **what** as neuter, and **why** as an interrogative adverb. The dative **whom** displaced the accusative, as in other pronouns. So the neuter accusative **what** became dative-accusative, as in the case of the neuter third personal pronoun. Two other indeclinable interrogatives of Old English appear in **which, whether,** though the latter has lost interrogative force.

RELATIVES

Old English had a relative particle which was used alone or with a demonstrative. The demonstrative could also be used as relative. The relative particle disappeared in early Middle English

and the neuter demonstrative **that** took its place.
To these **which** was added in the Middle period
and **who** in the Modern. **What,** occasionally em-
ployed as a relative in earlier English and to-day
by the illiterate, never established itself in stand-
ard usage. With **who** as a relative are of course
to be reckoned its inflected forms, **whose, whom.**

INDEFINITES

The so-called interrogatives are indefinites used
in asking questions. **Who, what, which** are still
indefinites sometimes, and always in their com-
pound forms as **whoso, whoever, whosoever,** and
others. Some other indefinites are derived from
adjectives, as **some, such, each,** of the oldest time.
Still others were from nouns, as **man,** which is still
occasionally indefinite, and **aught, naught.** To
these were added in Middle English **other, both,
many, few, little, all, enough, several, certain,** the
last two from French. These also form compound
indefinites, as **somebody, another, anything,** and
those without sign of union, as **some one, each
other.**

CHAPTER XV

THE VERB

THE Old English verb was made up of two principal groups, called strong and weak. Of these the weak is the prevailing form and will be treated as the more regular. Both were inflected in the active voice only. There were two tenses, a present and a past, and two numbers. There were two modes in both tenses,— an indicative and a subjunctive. There were, besides, an imperative mode in the present tense only, and three verbal nouns,— the infinitive, the present and past participles.

The distinguishing features of the weak verb were dental suffixes, -de (te) in the past tense, and -ed in past participle. The strong verb distinguished the same tenses by a different root vowel, as to-day in **sing–sang–sung**. In Old English, however, there were two different forms for the past tense of most strong verbs. In both classes uncompounded past participles often took the prefix **ge-**. This was lost in Middle English, except in

such rare poetic forms as **y-clept**, ' called,' of archaic verse.

Weak verbs were of two principal groups, with the following endings in their principal parts : —

	PAST	PAST PARTICIPLE
I.	**ede (de, te)**	**ed**
II.	**ode (ude, ade)**	**od (ud, ad)**

By the regular change of **o (u, a)** to **e**, these two classes became one in Middle English, with the endings **-ede (de, te)** for the past and **-ed** for the past participle. The loss of final **e** made the past and past participle the same for most verbs. Finally, syncopation of **e** in pronunciation brought weak verbs to their present forms. Usually, however, no syncopation of **e** took place after stems ending in **t** or **d**. In these cases **-ed** was still pronounced as a separate syllable.

There are thus two classes of weak verbs to-day. The great majority form their past tense and past participle with **-ed**, pronounced **d**, or **t** when the stem ends in a voiceless consonant. A smaller class still retains syllabic **-ed** in both forms. Examples of both modern classes are,

I. **din–dinned, deem–deemed, dip–dipped.**

II. **bode–boded, greet–greeted.**

To this simple development there are certain **variations** due to special causes. Older verbs ending in **d** or **t** sometimes absorbed the dental suffix, leaving no trace behind. Such became invariable in form, as **rid, bet,** or they have a different vowel in the past forms, as **bleed–bled.** A few change final **d** to **t,** as **bend–bent.** In other cases inflectional **d** after **n, m,** or **l** has become **t,** as in **burn–burnt, dream–dreamt, kneel–knelt.**

A few verbs irregular in Old English still retain such irregularity, as **bring–brought, sell–sold.** A still smaller number seem irregular because of shortening of the past vowel, as **flee–fled, hear–heard.** The verbs **have, make, clothe** have lost a medial consonant in the pasts **had, made, clad.** Such irregular weak verbs tend to become regular, as shown by the regular forms of **burn, dream, clothe, light, quit, whet, blend, build,** and others.

Strong verbs give the impression of great irregularity even in Old English. They belong to seven classes, distinguished by different vowels in their principal parts. Of these most of them had four, — the present, past singular, past plural, and past participle. So different were they from the weak verbs, and so divided among themselves, that they

were easily influenced by analogy. Two thir [s]
of the original three hundred have either becor [e]
weak or have disappeared entirely. The rest ha [ve]
been preserved by frequent use, just as a few nou [ns]
like **man–men** have remained irregular.

Even the strong verbs which have remaine [d]
have been greatly simplified. The four stems hav [e]
become three, often two, and sometimes on [e]
Minor variations have also disappeared. On th [e]
other hand, verbs of one class have sometime [s]
joined another, and occasionally phonetic change [s]
have added diversity. The history of such change [s]
belongs to more elaborate treatises. We shall he [re]
note only some of the more common particular [s]

Examples of verbs with three stems are, —

drive–drove–driven	**bid–bade–bidden**
freeze–froze–frozen	**shake–shook–shaken**
drink–drank–drunk	**grow–grew–grown**
	steal–stole–stolen

These represent each of the seven original classes [.]
Those with two stems to-day are, —

shine–shone	**cling–clung**	**wake–woke**
shoot–shot	**fight–fought**	**stand–stood**
bind–bound	**get–got**	**hold–held**

Examples of verbs that have become invariable are **burst, let** 'allow.'

As would be expected, the vast majority of borrowed verbs have become weak. A very few have been influenced by the strong classes. This is not strange for three Norse verbs with similar vowel variation in their own language. These are **thrive–throve–thriven, fling–flung,** and **take–took–taken. Reeve–rove–riven** is perhaps from another Teutonic language, the Dutch. One verb from French, **strive–strove–striven,** has also assumed strong forms. In equally rare cases weak verbs have assumed one or more strong forms, as **chide, hide, dig, wear.** Besides, **string** and **stave** are strong verbs formed from nouns in early Modern English.

With strong verbs must be classed a few called past presents. The past tenses of these original strong verbs became present by change of meaning, and displaced the older presents. They then assumed weak pasts to replace those lost. Those which have remained to Modern English are, —

can–could   dare–durst   shall–should   may–might

Formerly **wot–wiste, owe–ought,** and **mote–must** also belonged with these. **Wot–wiste** and **mote**

are archaic only, though the infinitive of the first exists in the expression **to wit.** **Owe** has become weak. **Ought** and **must** are now present as well as past, so that they have suffered a second time the change which made them past-presents at first.

Four verbs were still more irregular than the strong classes. These are **be, do, go,** and **will.** The first still has three different roots, **am, be, was.** **Go** has lost its older past form and assumed another, **went,** from the verb **wend.** **Will** and **do** need no special description.

Verbal Inflection

The inflection of Old English verbs may be seen from that of **dēman,** ' deem,' and **bindan,** 'bind.'

Indicative

	Present		Past	
	Weak	*Strong*	*Weak*	*Strong*
Sg.	dēme	binde	dēmde	band
	dēmest	bindest	dēmdest	bunde
	dēmeð	bindeð	dēmde	band
Pl.	dēmað	bindað	dēmden	bunden

Subjunctive

Sg.	dēme	binde	dēmde	bunde
Pl.	dēmen	binden	dēmden	bunden

	PRESENT	Imperative	PAST
Sg.	dēm	bind (binde)	
Pl.	dēman	bindan	
	dēmað	bindað	

Infinitive

| | dēman | bindan | |

Participles

| | dēmende | bindende | (ge)dēmed | (ge)bunden |

Some minor variations of certain verbs are not here included, but the scheme is exact enough for our purposes. Most of the inflectional simplification since Old English may be accounted for by the usual changes. These are the change of **a** to **e**, the loss of final **n**, and then of final **e**. In addition, the present third singular of to-day is derived from a Northern form ending in **-es**. Yet the older **-eth** remains in poetry and liturgical language. The present plural is from a Midland form in **-en** which, in Middle English, displaced the earlier form, and was then regularly lost.

The present subjunctive and the infinitive were reduced to their present forms without ending. The imperative lost its first plural, and its second followed the form of the present indicative plural.

The ending of the present participle was replaced by the noun suffix -ing.

The two past tense forms of strong verbs became one. Sometimes the singular, sometimes the plural, prevailed, as in **sing–sang–sung** beside **cling–clung**. The past indicative singular assumed the endings of the weak singular. The strong past participle lost **-en** in many cases, while in some it was reduced to **n** (**ne**), as in **seen, born, done**.

To the verbal system thus reduced were gradually added the compound forms of to-day. These were made by the use of independent verbs, which have now become auxiliaries. In Old English a compound passive was known, and some other forms, as a compound future, were beginning to be established. Later the compound perfects arose, and the mode forms called potential.

CHAPTER XVI

MINOR PARTS OF SPEECH, SUMMARY

ADVERBS are derived from adjectives, nouns, and pronouns. In Old English the most common adverbial suffix was -e, which made any adjective into an adverb. When this was lost in Middle English, adverbs and adjectives were alike, as to-day in **fast, first, hard**. There then developed the more extended use of the adverbial ending **-ly,** from the adverbial form of the suffix -līc, 'like.' This -ly ending was freely added to native and foreign-derived words. At the same time, relics of a less common adverbial ending are seen in **head-long, side-long, side-ling,** the last nearer the original form.

Adverbs were also formed from the oblique cases of adjectives or nouns. Accusatives of adjectives are **enough, full,** and those ending in **-ward** and **-wise,** as **homeward, upward, likewise**. Accusatives of nouns are **alway, meantime, meanwhile**. Genitives of adjectives are **else, unawares, upwards** ; of

nouns **needs,** and those ending in **-ways,** as **endways.**
Adverbial genitives by analogy are **forwards, once,
twice, thrice.** An instrumental of nouns accounts
for **sore, whilom, piecemeal.** Compound adverbs,
from prepositions with adjectives or nouns, are
along, before, together, away, beside, to-night. A
few of a similar sort are from French phrases, as
apart, perchance.

Adverbs from pronouns are **the** in **never-the-less,**
'**the** more **the** better,' and **thus, when, why.** Those
of place fall into series answering the questions
where, whence, whither. Such are, —

> **here—hence—hither   there—thence—thither**
> **where—whence—whither**

Pronoun compounds are **therefore, thereof, there-
upon, somewhere,** and similar forms.

In Old English, comparatives and superlatives of
adjectives could be used as adverbs without change
of form. A few remain, as the comparatives
harder, nearer, and superlatives in the phrases **at
best, at least.** Otherwise, for greater clearness, ad-
verbs are usually compared with **more** and **most.**

Negative, interrogative, and affirmative particles
are adverbs in origin and use. The commonest

Old English negative was **ne**, still used in Middle English. In early Modern English this was replaced by **not**, a shorter form of **naught** (**nought**). An Old English **nā** also remains in rare use with an adjective, as in 'that is **no** good.' This **no** is also our common word of denial, though **nay** from Norse also exists. The affirmative particles **yea, yes,** are of native origin; so also the interrogatives **how, when, whence, where, whither, why.**

Prepositions

Prepositions were originally adverbs. The simple ones preserved are **at, after, for, from, in, of, on, out, over, to, through, under, with.** To these **by** and **till** were added in Middle English. Compound prepositions are from phrases made up of a preposition and either a noun or pronoun, or an adjective or adverb of place. Of the first are **among, between ;** of the second, **above, before, underneath, within.** **Except** is an Old French participle. The list has been much increased in modern times. Many phrases are compound prepositions, though without mark of union. Examples are **as to, in respect to, in accordance with.**

CONJUNCTIONS

Conjunctions are also adverbs in origin, or sometimes pronouns as the conjunction **that**. Examples of simple conjunctions from Old English are **and, for, if, than, then, that, though, since, so, yet**. Compound conjunctions are **because, but** (now become a monosyllable), **therefore, wherefore**. To these have been added adverbial phrases in more modern times, as **for as much, notwithstanding, as well as**.

INTERJECTIONS

Interjections are not strictly a separate class of words, since any word or sentence may be used as an interjection or exclamation. Certain words constantly used as interjections are **lo, woe, welaway, what**, all of Old English origin. **Alas** is from French. Others are more modern.

SUMMARY

The changes in inflections from Old to Modern English may be summed up in the one word simplification. The reduction in the number of inflectional forms has been very great. The shortening of those that remain by loss of inflectional

endings has been equally striking.   Besides, not only have inflectional forms been reduced in number, but many irregularities have disappeared. The result is an inflectional system as simple as that of any European language.

Most inflectional changes were completed during Old and Middle English times.   The simplifying and regularizing tendencies were most powerful in the Anglian region, first Northern and then Midland districts being affected. Such tendencies, too, were in the main inherent in the language itself. They were in no sense begun by outside influences. It may be safely assumed, therefore, that most if not all inflectional simplifications would have taken place had there been no Danish or Norman conquests.

Simplification of inflectional forms has brought no loss of power in expression.   An analytic language is as expressive in its way as one with numerous inflections.   The two merely employ different means for the same effects, — clearness and force.   The inflectional changes in English, therefore, represent development as truly as do those in any language of different type.   Indeed, no one can rightly study the great literature of Modern

English without believing that the English language, with its greater simplicity, is an even better medium of expression than at any time in the past.

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Subjects and names begin with capitals; words used as examples, except proper names, with small letters; titles of works are put in quotation marks.