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Foreign Influences on Old English

53. The Contact of English with Other Languages.

The language that was described in the preceding chapter was not merely the product of the dialects brought to England by the Jutes, Saxons, and Angles. These formed its basis, the sole basis of its grammar and the source of by far the largest part of its vocabulary. But other elements entered into it. In the course of the first 700 years of its existence in England it was brought into contact with at least three other languages, the languages of the Celts, the Romans, and the Scandinavians. From each of these contacts it shows certain effects, especially additions to its vocabulary. The nature of these contacts and the changes that were effected by them will form the subject of this chapter.

54. The Celtic Influence.

Nothing would seem more reasonable than to expect that the conquest of the Celtic population of Britain by the Anglo-Saxons and the subsequent mixture of the two peoples should have resulted in a corresponding mixture of their languages; that consequently we should find in the Old English vocabulary numerous instances of words that the Anglo-Saxons heard in the speech of the native population and adopted. For it is apparent that the Celts were by no means exterminated except in certain areas, and that in most of England large numbers of them were gradually assimilated into the new culture. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle reports that at Andredesceaster or Pevensy a deadly struggle occurred between the native population and the newcomers and that not a single Briton was left alive. The evidence of the place-names in this region lends support to the statement. But this was probably an exceptional case. In the east and southeast, where the Germanic conquest was fully accomplished at a fairly early date, it is probable that there were fewer survivals of a Celtic population than elsewhere. Large numbers of the defeated fled to the west. Here it is apparent that a considerable Celtic-speaking population survived until fairly late times. Some such situation is suggested by a whole cluster of Celtic place-names in the northeastern corner of Dorsetshire.¹ It is altogether likely that many Celts were held as slaves by the conquerors and that many of the Anglo-Saxons chose Celtic mates. In parts of the island, contact between the two peoples must have been constant and in some districts intimate for several generations.

55. *Celtic Place-Names and Other Loanwords.*

When we come, however, to seek the evidence for this contact in the English language, investigation yields very meager results. Such evidence as there is survives chiefly in place-names.² The kingdom of *Kent*, for example, owes its name to the Celtic word *Canti* or *Cantion*, the meaning of which is unknown, while the two ancient Northumbrian kingdoms of *Deira* and *Bernicia* derive their designations from Celtic tribal names. Other districts, especially in the west and southwest, preserve in their present-day names traces of their earlier Celtic designations. *Devonshire* contains in the first element the tribal name *Dumnonii*, *Cornwall* means the ‘Cornubian Welsh’, and the former county *Cumberland* (now part of *Cumbria*) is the ‘land of the Cymry or Britons’. Moreover, a number of important centers in the Roman period have names in which Celtic elements are embodied. The name *London* itself, although the origin of the word is somewhat uncertain, most likely goes back to a Celtic designation. The first syllable of *Winchester*, *Salisbury*, *Exeter*, *Gloucester*, *Worcester*, *Lichfield*, and a score of other names of cities is traceable to a Celtic source, and the earlier name of Canterbury (*Durovernum*) is originally Celtic. But it is in the names of rivers and hills and places in proximity to these natural features that the greatest number of Celtic names survive. Thus the *Thames* is a Celtic river name, and various Celtic words for river or water are preserved in the names *Avon*, *Exe*, *Esk*, *Usk*, *Dover*, and *Wye*. Celtic words meaning ‘hill’ are found in place-names like *Barr* (cf. Welsh *bar* ‘top’, ‘summit’), *Bredon* (cf. Welsh *bre* ‘hill’), *Bryn Mawr* (cf. Welsh *bryn* ‘hill and *mawr* ‘great’), *Creech*, *Pendle* (cf. Welsh *pen* ‘top’), and others. Certain other Celtic elements occur more or less frequently such as *cumb* (a deep valley) in names like *Duncombe*, *Holcombe*, *Winchcombe*; *torr* (high rock, peak) in *Torr*, *Torcross*,

¹ R.E.Zachrisson, *Romans, Kelts, and Saxons in Ancient Britain* (Uppsala, Sweden, 1927), p. 55.

² An admirable survey of the Celtic element in English place-names is given by E.Ekwall in the *Introduction to the Survey of English Place-Names*, ed. A.Mawer and F.M.Stenton for the English Place-Name Society, 1, part 1 (Cambridge, UK, 1924), pp. 15–35.

Torhill; *pill* (a tidal creek) in *Pylle*, *Huntspill*; and *brocc* (badger) in *Brockholes*, *Brockhall*, etc. Besides these purely Celtic elements a few Latin words such as *castra*, *fontana*, *fossa*, *portus*, and *vīcus* were used in naming places during the Roman occupation of the island and were passed on by the Celts to the English. These will be discussed later. It is natural that Celtic place-names should be more common in the west than in the east and southeast, but the evidence of these names shows that the Celts impressed themselves upon the Germanic consciousness at least to the extent of causing the newcomers to adopt many of the local names current in Celtic speech and to make them a permanent part of their vocabulary.

Outside of place-names, however, the influence of Celtic upon the English language is almost negligible. Not more than a score of words in Old English can be traced with reasonable probability to a Celtic source. Within this small number it is possible to distinguish two groups: (1) those that the AngloSaxons learned through everyday contact with the natives, and (2) those that were introduced by the Irish missionaries in the north. The former were transmitted orally and were of popular character; the latter were connected with religious activities and were more or less learned. The popular words include *binn* (basket, crib), *bratt* (cloak), and *brocc* (brock or badger); a group of words for geographical features that had not played much part in the experience of the Anglo-Saxons in their continental home—*crag*, *luh* (lake), *cumb* (valley), and *torr*³ (outcropping or projecting rock, peak), the two latter chiefly as elements in place-names; possibly the words *dun* (dark colored), and *ass* (ultimately from Latin *asinus*). Words of the second group, those that came into English through Celtic Christianity, are likewise few in number. In 563 St. Columba had come with twelve monks from Ireland to preach to his kinsmen in Britain. On the little island of Iona off the west coast of Scotland he established a monastery and made it his headquarters for the remaining thirty-four years of his life. From this center many missionaries went out, founded other religious houses, and did much to spread Christian doctrine and learning. As a result of their activity the words *ancor* (hermit), *dr̥y* (magician), *cine* (a gathering of parchment leaves), *cross*, *clugge* (bell), *gabolrind* (compass), *mind* (diadem), and perhaps *st̥ær* (history) and *cursian* (to curse), came into at least partial use in Old English.

It does not appear that many of these Celtic words attained a very permanent place in the English language. Some soon died out, and others acquired only local currency. The relation of the two peoples was not such as to bring

³ Cf. E.Ekwall, "Zu zwei keltischen Lehnwörtern in Altenglischen," *Englische Studien*, 54 (1920), 102–10.

about any considerable influence on English life or on English speech. The surviving Celts were a submerged people. The Anglo-Saxon found little occasion to adopt Celtic modes of expression, and the Celtic influence remains the least of the early influences that affected the English language.

56. Three Latin Influences on Old English.

If the influence of Celtic upon Old English was slight, it was doubtless so because the relation of the Celt to the Anglo-Saxon was that of a submerged culture and because the Celt was not in a position to make notable contributions to Anglo-Saxon civilization. It was quite otherwise with the second great influence exerted upon English—that of Latin—and the circumstances under which they met. Latin was not the language of a conquered people. It was the language of a highly regarded civilization, one from which the Anglo-Saxons wanted to learn. Contact with that civilization, at first commercial and military, later religious and intellectual, extended over many centuries and was constantly renewed. It began long before the Anglo-Saxons came to England and continued throughout the Old English period. For several hundred years, while the Germanic tribes who later became the English were still occupying their continental homes, they had various relations with the Romans through which they acquired a considerable number of Latin words. Later when they came to England they saw the evidences of the long Roman rule in the island and learned from the Celts additional Latin words that had been acquired by them. And a century and a half later still, when Roman missionaries reintroduced Christianity into the island, this new cultural influence resulted in a quite extensive adoption of Latin elements into the language. There were thus three distinct occasions on which borrowing from Latin occurred before the end of the Old English period, and it will be of interest to consider more in detail the character and extent of these borrowings.

57. Chronological Criteria.

In order to form an accurate idea of the share that each of these three periods had in extending the resources of the English vocabulary it is first necessary to determine as closely as possible the date at which each of the borrowed words entered the language. This is naturally somewhat difficult to do, and in the case of some words it is impossible. But in a large number of cases it is possible to assign a word to a given period with a high degree of probability and often with certainty. It will be instructive to pause for a moment to inquire how this is done.

The evidence that can be employed is of various kinds and naturally of varying value. Most obvious is the appearance of the word in literature. If a given word occurs with fair frequency in texts such as *Beowulf*, or the poems of Cynewulf, such occurrence indicates that the word has had time to pass into current use and that it came into English not later than the early part of the period of Christian influence. But it does not tell us how much earlier it was known in the language, because the earliest written records in English do

not go back beyond the year 700. Moreover the late appearance of a word in literature is no proof of late adoption. The word may not be the kind of word that would naturally occur very often in literary texts, and so much of Old English literature has been lost that it would be very unsafe to argue about the existence of a word on the basis of existing remains. Some words that are not found recorded before the tenth century (e.g., *pīpe* 'pipe', *cīese* 'cheese') can be assigned confidently on other grounds to the period of continental borrowing.

The character of the word sometimes gives some clue to its date. Some words are obviously learned and point to a time when the church had become well established in the island. On the other hand, the early occurrence of a word in several of the Germanic dialects points to the general circulation of the word in the Germanic territory and its probable adoption by the ancestors of the English on the continent. Testimony of this kind must of course be used with discrimination. A number of words found in Old English and in Old High German, for example, can hardly have been borrowed by either language before the Anglo-Saxons migrated to England but are due to later independent adoption under conditions more or less parallel, brought about by the introduction of Christianity into the two areas. But it can hardly be doubted that a word like *copper*, which is rare in Old English, was nevertheless borrowed on the continent when we find it in no less than six Germanic languages.

Much the most conclusive evidence of the date at which a word was borrowed, however, is to be found in the phonetic form of the word. The changes that take place in the sounds of a language can often be dated with some definiteness, and the presence or absence of these changes in a borrowed word constitutes an important test of age. A full account of these changes would carry us far beyond the scope of this book, but one or two examples may serve to illustrate the principle. Thus there occurred in Old English, as in most of the Germanic languages, a change known as *i-umlaut*⁴. This change affected certain accented vowels and diphthongs (α , \check{a} , \check{o} , \check{u} , \check{ea} , \check{eo} , and \check{io}) when they were followed in the next syllable by an \check{i} or j . Under such circumstances α and \check{a} became \check{e} , and \check{o} became \check{e} , \check{a} became \bar{a} , and \check{u} became \check{y} . The diphthongs \check{ea} , \check{eo} , \check{io} became \check{ie} , later \check{i} , \check{y} . Thus **ban̄kiz* > *benc* (bench), **mūsiz* > *mȳs*, plural of *mūs* (mouse), etc. The change occurred in English in the course of the seventh century, and when we find it taking place in a word borrowed from Latin it indicates that the Latin word had

⁴ *Umlaut* is a German word meaning 'alteration of sound'. In English this is sometimes called *mutation*.

been taken into English by that time. Thus Latin *monēta* (which became **munit* in Prehistoric OE) > *mynet* (a coin, Mod. E. *mint*) and is an early borrowing. Another change (even earlier) that helps us to date a borrowed word is that known as *palatal diphthongization*. By this sound-change an *ǣ* or *ĕ* in early Old English was changed to a diphthong (*ĕa* and *īe* respectively) when preceded by certain palatal consonants (*ċ*, *ġ*, *sc*). OE *cīese* (L. *cāseus*, cheese), mentioned above, shows both *i-umlaut* and palatal diphthongization (*cāseus* > **ċāesi* > **ċēasi* > *cīese*). In many words evidence for date is furnished by the sound-changes of Vulgar Latin. Thus, for example, an intervocalic *p* (and *p* in the combination *pr*) in the late Latin of northern Gaul (seventh century) was modified to a sound approximating a *v*, and the fact that L. *cuprum*, *coprum* (copper) appears in OE as *copor* with the *p* unchanged indicates a period of borrowing prior to this change (cf. F. *cuivre*). Again Latin *ī* changed to *ē* before A.D. 400 so that words like OE *biscop* (L. *episcopus*), *disc* (L. *discus*), *sigel*, 'brooch' (L. *sigillum*), etc., which do not show this change, were borrowed by the English on the continent. But enough has been said to indicate the method and to show that the distribution of the Latin words in Old English among the various periods at which borrowing took place rests not upon guesses, however shrewd, but upon definite facts and upon fairly reliable phonetic inferences.

58. Continental Borrowing (Latin Influence of the Zero Period).

The first Latin words to find their way into the English language owe their adoption to the early contact between the Romans and the Germanic tribes on the continent. Several hundred Latin words found in the various Germanic dialects at an early date—some in one dialect only, others in several—testify to the extensive intercourse between the two peoples. The Germanic population within the empire by the fourth century is estimated at several million. They are found in all ranks and classes of society, from slaves in the fields to commanders of important divisions of the Roman army. Although they were scattered all over the empire, they were naturally most numerous along the northern frontier. This stretched along the Rhine and the Danube and bordered on Germanic territory. Close to the border was Treves, in the third and fourth centuries the most flourishing city in Gaul, already boasting Christian churches, a focus of eight military roads, where all the luxury and splendor of Roman civilization were united almost under the gaze of the Germanic tribes on the Moselle and the Rhine. Traders, Germanic as well as Roman, came and went, while Germanic youth returning from within the empire must have carried back glowing accounts of Roman cities and Roman life. Such intercourse between the two peoples was certain to carry words from one language to the other.

The frequency of the intercourse may naturally be expected to diminish somewhat as one recedes from the borders of the empire. Roman military operations, for example, seldom extended as far as the district occupied by the Angles or the Jutes. But after the conquest of Gaul by Caesar, Roman merchants quickly found their way into all parts of the Germanic territory, even into Scandinavia, so that the inhabitants of these more remote sections were by no means cut off from Roman influence. Moreover,

intercommunication between the different Germanic tribes was frequent and made possible the transference of Latin words from one tribe to another. In any case some sixty words from the Latin can be credited with a considerable degree of probability to the ancestors of the English in their continental homes.

The adopted words naturally indicate the new conceptions that the Germanic peoples acquired from this contact with a higher civilization. Next to agriculture the chief occupation of the Germanic tribes in the empire was war, and this experience is reflected in words like *camp* (battle), *segn* (banner), *pīl* (pointed stick, javelin), *weall* (wall), *pytt* (pit), *stræt* (road, street), *mīl* (mile), and *miltestre* (courtesan). More numerous are the words connected with trade. They traded amber, furs, slaves, and probably certain raw materials for the products of Roman handicrafts, articles of utility, luxury, and adornment. The words *cēap* (bargain; cf. Eng., *cheap*, *chapman*) and *mangian* (to trade) with its derivatives *mangere* (monger), *mangung* (trade, commerce), and *mangunghūs* (shop) are fundamental, while *pund* (pound), *mydd* (bushel), *sēam* (burden, loan), and *mynet* (coin) are terms likely to be employed. From the last word Old English formed the words *mynetian* (to mint or coin) and *mynetere* (money-changer). One of the most important branches of Roman commerce with the Germanic peoples was the wine trade: hence such words in English as *wīn* (wine), *must* (new wine), *eced* (vinegar), and *flasce*⁵ (flask, bottle). To this period are probably to be attributed the words *cylle* (L. *culleus*, leather bottle), *cyrfette* (L. *curcubita*, gourd), and *sester* (jar, pitcher). A number of the new words relate to domestic life and designate household articles, clothing, and the like: *cytel* (kettle; L. *catillus*, *catīnus*) *mēse* (table), *scamol* (L. *scamellum*, bench, stool; cf. modern *shambles*), *teped* (carpet, curtain; L. *tapētum*), *pyle* (L. *pulvinus*, pillow), *pilece* (L. *pellicia*, robe of skin), and *sigel* (brooch, necklace; L. *sigillum*). Certain other words of a similar kind probably belong here, although the evidence for their adoption thus early is not in every case conclusive: *cycene* (kitchen; L. *coquīna*), *cuppe* (L. *cuppa*, cup), *disc* (dish; L. *discus*), *cucler* (spoon; L. *cocleārium*), *mortere*

⁵ The OE *flasce* should have become *flash* in Modern English, so that the word was probably reintroduced later and may have been influenced (as the *OED* suggests) by the Italian *fiasco*.

(L. *mortārium*, a mortar, a vessel of hard material), *līnen* (cognate with or from L. *līnum*, flax), *līne* (rope, line; L. *līnea*), and *gimm* (L. *gemma*, gem). The speakers of the Germanic dialects adopted Roman words for certain foods, such as *cīese* (L. *cāseus* cheese), *spelt* (wheat), *pipor* (pepper), *senep* (mustard; L. *sināpi*), *cisten* (chestnut tree; L. *castanea*), *cīres* (*bēam*) (cherry tree; L. *cerasus*), while to this period are probably to be

assigned *butere* (butter; L. *būtȳrum*),⁶ *ynne* (*lēac*) (L. *ūnio*, onion), *plūme* (plum), *pise* (L. *pisum*, pea), and *mintē* (L. *mentha*, mint). Roman contributions to the building arts are evidenced by such words as *cealc* (chalk), *copor* (copper), *pic* (pitch), and *tigele* (tile), while miscellaneous words such as *mūl* (mule), *draca* (dragon), *pāwa* (peacock), the adjectives *sicor* (L. *sēcūrus*, safe) and *calu* (L. *calvus*, bald), *segne* (seine), *pīpe* (pipe, musical instrument), *biscop* (bishop), *cāsere* (emperor), and *Saeternesdæg* (Saturday) may be mentioned. OE *cirice* (church) derives from a word borrowed into West Germanic during this period, though probably from Greek *κυρικήν* *covr* rather than from Latin.⁷

In general, if we are surprised at the number of words acquired from the Romans at so early a date by the Germanic tribes that came to England, we can see nevertheless that the

words were such as they would be likely to borrow and such as reflect in a very reasonable way the relations that existed between the two peoples.

59. *Latin through Celtic Transmission (Latin Influence of the First Period).*

The circumstances responsible for the slight influence that Celtic exerted on Old English limited in like manner the Latin influence that sprang from the period of Roman occupation. From what has been said above (see page 45) about the Roman rule in Britain, the extent to which the country was Romanized, and the employment of Latin by certain elements in the population, one would expect a considerable number of Latin words from this period to have remained in use and to appear in the English language today. But this is not the case. It would be hardly too much to say that not five words outside of a few elements found in place-names can be really proved to owe their presence in English to the Roman occupation of Britain.⁸ It is probable that the use of Latin as a spoken language did not long survive the end of Roman rule in the island and that such vestiges as remained for a time were lost in the disorders that accompanied the Germanic invasions. There was thus no opportunity for direct contact between Latin and Old English in England, and such Latin words as could have found their way into English would have had to come in through Celtic transmission. The Celts, indeed, had adopted a considerable number of Latin words—more than 600 have been identified—but the relations between the Celts and the English were such, as we have already seen, that these words were not passed on. Among the few Latin words that the Anglo-Saxons seem likely to have acquired upon settling in England, one of the most likely, in spite of its absence from the Celtic languages, is *ceaster*. This word, which represents the Latin *castra* (camp), is a common designation in Old English for a town or enclosed community. It forms a familiar element in English place-names such as *Chester*, *Colchester*, *Dorchester*, *Manchester*, *Winchester*, *Lancaster*, *Doncaster*, *Gloucester*, *Worcester*, and many others. Some of these refer to sites of Roman camps, but it must not be thought that a Roman settlement underlies all the towns whose names contain this common element. The English attached it freely to the designation of any enclosed place intended for habitation, and many of the places so designated were known by quite different names in Roman times. A few other words are thought for one reason or another to belong to this period: *port* (harbor, gate, town) from L. *portus* and *porta*; *munt*

⁶ *Butter* is a difficult word to explain. The unweakened *t* suggests early borrowing. *Butter* was practically unknown to the Romans; Pliny has to explain its meaning and use. But a well-known allusion in Sidonius Apollinaris testifies to its use among the Burgundians on their hair. The bishop complains of the rancid odor of Burgundian chiefs with buttered hair.

⁷ The *OED* has an interesting essay on the uncertainties of the etymology of *church*. Other words that probably belong to the period of continental borrowing are *ynce* (ounce, inch), *palenise* (palace), *solor* (upper room), *taefel* (chessboard), *miscian* (to mix), and *olfend* (camel), but there is some uncertainty about their origin or history.

⁸ J. Loth in *Les Mots latins dans les langues brittoniques* (Paris, 1892, p. 29) assigns fifteen words to this period. Some of these, however, are more probably to be considered continental borrowings.

(mountain) from L. *mōns*, *montem*; *torr* (tower, rock) possibly from L. *turris*, possibly from Celtic; *wīc* (village) from L. *vīcus*. All of these words are found also as elements in place-names. It is possible that some of the Latin words that the Germanic speakers had acquired on the continent, such as *street* (L. *strāta via*), *wall*, *wine*, and others, were reinforced by the presence of the same words in Celtic. At best, however, the Latin influence of the First Period remains much the slightest of all the influences that Old English owed to contact with Roman civilization.

60. *Latin Influence of the Second Period: The Christianizing of Britain.*

The greatest influence of Latin upon Old English was occasioned by the conversion of Britain to Roman Christianity beginning in 597. The religion was far from new in the island, because Irish monks had been preaching the gospel in the north since the founding of the monastery of Iona by Columba in 563. However, 597 marks the beginning of a systematic attempt on the part of Rome to convert the inhabitants and make England a Christian country. According to the well-known story reported by Bede as a tradition current in his day, the mission of St. Augustine was inspired by an experience of the man who later became Pope Gregory the Great. Walking one morning in the marketplace at Rome, he came upon some fair-haired boys about to be sold as slaves and was told that they were from the island of Britain and were pagans. “‘Alas! what pity,’ said he, ‘that the author of darkness is possessed of men of such fair countenances, and that being remarkable for such a graceful exterior, their minds should be void of inward grace?’ He therefore again asked, what was the name of that nation and was answered, that they were called Angles. ‘Right,’ said he, ‘for they have an angelic face, and it is fitting that such should be co-heirs with the angels in heaven. What is the name,’ proceeded he, ‘of the province from which they are brought?’ It was replied that the natives of that province were called Deiri. ‘Truly are they *de ira*’ said he, ‘plucked from wrath, and called to the mercy of Christ. How is the king of that province called?’ They told him his name was Ælla; and he, alluding to the name, said ‘Alleluia, the praise of God the Creator, must be sung in those parts.’” The same tradition records that Gregory wished himself to undertake the mission to Britain but could not be spared. Some years later, however, when he had become pope, he had not forgotten his former intention and looked about for someone whom he could send at the head of a missionary band. Augustine, the person of his choice, was a man well known to him. The two had lived together in the same monastery, and Gregory knew him to be modest and devout and thought him well suited to the task assigned him. With a little company of about forty monks Augustine set out for what seemed then like the end of the earth.

It is not easy to appreciate the difficulty of the task that lay before this small band. Their problem was not so much to substitute one ritual for another as to change the philosophy of a nation. The religion that the Anglo-Saxons shared with the other Germanic tribes seems to have had but a slight hold on the people at the close of the sixth century; but their habits of mind, their ideals, and the action to which these gave rise were often in sharp contrast to the teachings of the New Testament. Germanic philosophy exalted physical courage, independence even to haughtiness, loyalty to one’s family or leader that left no wrong unavenged. Christianity preached meekness, humility, and

patience under suffering and said that if a man struck you on one cheek you should turn the other. Clearly it was no small task that Augustine and his forty monks faced in trying to alter the age-old mental habits of such a people. They might even have expected difficulty in obtaining a respectful hearing. But they seem to have been men of exemplary lives, appealing personality, and devotion to purpose, and they owed their ultimate success as much to what they were as to what they said. Fortunately, upon their arrival in England one circumstance was in their favor. There was in the kingdom of Kent, in which they landed, a small number of Christians. But the number, though small, included no less a person than the queen. Æthelberht, the king, had sought his wife among the powerful nation of the Franks, and the princess Bertha had been given to him only on condition that she be allowed to continue undisturbed in her Christian faith. Æthelberht set up a small chapel near his palace in Kentwara-byrig (Canterbury), and there the priest who accompanied Bertha to England conducted regular services for her and the numerous dependents whom she brought with her. The circumstances under which Æthelberht received Augustine and his companions are related in the extract from Bede given in § 47 above. Æthelberht was himself baptized within three months, and his example was followed by numbers of his subjects. By the time Augustine died seven years later, the kingdom of Kent had become wholly Christian.

The conversion of the rest of England was a gradual process. In 635 Aidan, a monk from the Scottish monastery of Iona, independently undertook the reconversion of Northumbria at the invitation of King Oswald. Northumbria had been Christianized earlier by Paulinus but had reverted to paganism after the defeat of King Edwin by the Welsh and the Mercians in 632. Aidan was a man of great sympathy and tact. With a small band of followers he journeyed from town to town, and wherever he preached he drew crowds to hear him. Within twenty years he had made all Northumbria Christian. There were periods of reversion to paganism, and some clashes between the Celtic and the Roman leaders over doctrine and authority, but England was slowly won over to the faith. It is significant that the Christian missionaries were allowed considerable freedom in their labors. There is not a single instance recorded in which any of them suffered martyrdom in the cause they espoused. Within a hundred years of the landing of Augustine in Kent all England was Christian.

61. Effects of Christianity on English Civilization.

The introduction of Christianity meant the building of churches and the establishment of monasteries. Latin, the language of the services and of ecclesiastical learning, was once more heard in England. Schools were established in most of the monasteries and larger churches. Some of these became famous through their great teachers, and from them trained men went out to set up other schools at other centers. The beginning of this movement was in 669, when a Greek bishop, Theodore of Tarsus, was made archbishop of Canterbury. He was accompanied by Hadrian, an African by birth, a man described by Bede as "of the greatest skill in both the Greek and Latin tongues." They devoted considerable time and energy to teaching. "And because," says Bede, "they were abundantly learned in sacred and profane literature, they gathered a crowd of disciples...and together with the books of Holy Writ, they also taught the arts of poetry,

astronomy, and computation of the church calendar; a testimony of which is that there are still living at this day some of their scholars, who are as well versed in the Greek and Latin tongues as in their own, in which they were born." A decade or two later Aldhelm carried on a similar work at Malmesbury. He was a remarkable classical scholar. He had an exceptional knowledge of Latin literature, and he wrote Latin verse with ease. In the north the school at York became in time almost as famous as that of Canterbury. The two monasteries of Wearmouth and Jarrow were founded by Benedict Biscop, who had been with Theodore and Hadrian at Canterbury, and who on five trips to Rome brought back a rich and valuable collection of books. His most famous pupil was the Venerable Bede, a monk at Jarrow. Bede assimilated all the learning of his time. He wrote on grammar and prosody, science and chronology, and composed numerous commentaries on the books of the Old and New Testament. His most famous work is the *Ecclesiastical History of the English People* (731), from which we have already had occasion to quote more than once and from which we derive a large part of our knowledge of the early history of England. Bede's spiritual grandchild was Alcuin, of York, whose fame as a scholar was so great that in 782 Charlemagne called him to be the head of his Palace School. In the eighth century England held the intellectual leadership of Europe, and it owed this leadership to the church. In like manner vernacular literature and the arts received a new impetus. Workers in stone and glass were brought from the continent for the improvement of church building. Rich embroidery, the illumination of manuscripts, and church music occupied others. Moreover the monasteries cultivated their land by improved methods of agriculture and made numerous contributions to domestic economy. In short, the church as the carrier of Roman civilization influenced the course of English life in many directions, and, as is to be expected, numerous traces of this influence are to be seen in the vocabulary of Old English.

62. The Earlier Influence of Christianity on the Vocabulary.

From the introduction of Christianity in 597 to the close of the Old English period is a stretch of more than 500 years. During all this time Latin words must have been making their way gradually into the English language. It is likely that the first wave of religious feeling that resulted from the missionary zeal of the seventh century, and that is reflected in intense activity in church building and the establishing of monasteries during this century, was responsible also for the rapid importation of Latin words into the vocabulary. The many new conceptions that followed in the train of the new religion would naturally demand expression and would at times find the resources of the language inadequate. But it would be a mistake to think that the enrichment of the vocabulary that now took place occurred overnight. Some words came in almost immediately, others only at the end of this period. In fact, it is fairly easy to divide the Latin borrowings of the Second Period into two groups, more or less equal in size but quite different in character. The one group represents words whose phonetic form shows that they were borrowed early and whose early adoption is attested also by the fact that they had found their way into literature by the time of Alfred. The other contains words of a more learned character first recorded in the tenth and eleventh centuries and owing their introduction clearly to

the religious revival that accompanied the Benedictine Reform. It will be well to consider them separately.

It is obvious that the most typical as well as the most numerous class of words introduced by the new religion would have to do with that religion and the details of its external organization. Words are generally taken over by one language from another in answer to a definite need. They are adopted because they express ideas that are new or because they are so intimately associated with an object or a concept that acceptance of the thing involves acceptance also of the word. A few words relating to Christianity such as *church* and *bishop* were, as we have seen, borrowed earlier. The Anglo-Saxons had doubtless plundered churches and come in contact with bishops before they came to England. But the great majority of words in Old English having to do with the church and its services, its physical fabric and its ministers, when not of native origin were borrowed at this time. Because most of these words have survived in only slightly altered form in Modern English, the examples may be given in their modern form. The list includes *abbot, alms, altar, angel, anthem, Arian, ark, candle, canon, chalice, cleric, cowl, deacon, disciple, epistle, hymn, litany, manna, martyr, mass, minster, noon, nun, offer, organ, pall, palm, pope, priest, provost, psalm, psalter, relic, rule, shrift, shrine, thrive, stole, subdeacon, synod, temple, and tunic*. Some of these were reintroduced later. But the church also exercised a profound influence on the domestic life of the people. This is seen in the adoption of many words, such as the names of articles of clothing and household use—*cap, sock, silk, purple, chest, mat, sack*;⁹ words denoting foods, such as *beet, caul* (cabbage), *lentil* (OE *lent*), *millet* (OE *mil*), *pear, radish, doe, oyster* (OE *ostre*), *lobster, mussel*, to which we may add the noun *cook*;¹⁰ names of trees, plants, and herbs (often cultivated for their medicinal properties), such as *box, pine*,¹¹ *aloes, balsam, fennel, hyssop, lily, mallow, marshmallow, myrrh, rue, savory* (OE *sæprige*), and the general word *plant*. A certain number of words having to do with education and learning reflect another aspect of the church's influence. Such are *school, master, Latin* (possibly an earlier borrowing), *grammatic(al), verse, meter, gloss, notary* (a scribe). Finally we may mention a number of words too miscellaneous to admit of profitable classification, like *anchor, coulter, fan* (for winnowing), *fever, place* (cf. *marketplace*), *spelter* (asphalt), *sponge, elephant, phoenix, mancus* (a coin), and some more or less learned or literary words, such as *calend, circle, legion, giant, consul, and talent*. The words cited in these examples are mostly nouns, but Old English borrowed also a number of verbs and adjectives such as *āspendan* (to spend; L. *expendere*), *bemūtian* (to exchange; L. *mūtāre*), *dihtan* (to compose; L. *dictāre*) *pīnian* (to torture; L. *poena*), *pinsian* (to weigh; L. *pēnsāre*), *pyngan* (to prick; L. *pungere*), *sealtian* (to dance; L. *saltāre*), *temprian* (to temper; L. *temperāre*), *trifolian* (to grind; L. *trībulāre*), *tyrnan* (to turn; L. *tornāre*), and *crisp* (L. *crispus*, 'curly'). But enough has been said to indicate the extent and variety of the borrowings from Latin in the early days

⁹ Other words of this sort, which have not survived in Modern English, are *cemes* (shirt), *swifflere* (slipper), *sūtere* (shoemaker), *byden* (tub, bushel), *bytt* (leather bottle), *cēcac* (jug), *læfel* (cup), *orc* (pitcher), and *stræf* (blanket, rug).

¹⁰ Cf. also OE *cēpe* (onion, L. *cēpa*), *nāp* (turnip, L. *nāpus*), *sigle* (rye, V.L. *sigale*).

¹¹ Also *sæppe* (spruce-fir), *mōrbēam* (mulberry tree).

of Christianity in England and to show how quickly the language reflected the broadened horizon that the English people owed to the church.

63. The Benedictine Reform.

The flourishing state of the church that resulted in these significant additions to the English language unfortunately did not continue uninterrupted. One cause of the decline is to be attributed to the Danes, who at the end of the eighth century began their ravages upon the country. Lindisfarne was burnt in 793, and Jarrow, Bede's monastery, was plundered the following year. In the ninth century throughout Northumbria and Mercia churches and monasteries lay everywhere in ruins. By the tenth century the decline had affected the moral fiber of the church. It would seem as though once success had been attained and a reasonable degree of security, the clergy relaxed their efforts. Wealthy men had given land freely to religious foundations in the hope of laying up spiritual reserves for themselves against the life in the next world. Among the clergy poverty gave way to ease, and ease by a natural transition passed into luxury. Probably a less worthy type was drawn by these new conditions into the religious profession. We hear much complaint about immoderate feasting and drinking and vanity in dress. In the religious houses discipline became lax, services were neglected, monasteries were occupied by groups of secular priests, many of them married; immorality was flagrant. The work of education was neglected, and learning decayed. By the time of Alfred things had reached such a pass that he looked upon the past as a golden age which had gone, "when the Kings who ruled obeyed God and His evangelists," and when "the religious orders were earnest about doctrine, and learning, and all the services they owed to God"; and he lamented that the decay of learning was so great at the beginning of his reign "that there were very few on this side of the Humber who could understand their rituals in English, or translate a letter from Latin into English, and I believe not many beyond the Humber. So few were there that I cannot remember a single one south of the Thames when I came to the kingship." A century later Ælfric, abbot of Eynsham, echoed the same sentiment when he said, "Until Dunstan and Athelwold revived learning in the monastic life no English priest could either write a letter in Latin, or understand one." It is hardly likely, therefore, that many Latin words were added to the English language during these years when religion and learning were both at such a low ebb.

But abuses when bad enough have a way of bringing about their own reformation. What is needed generally is an individual with the zeal to lead the way and the ability to set an example that inspires imitation. King Alfred had made a start. Besides restoring churches and founding monasteries, he strove for twenty years to spread education in his kingdom and foster learning. His efforts bore little fruit. But in the latter half of the tenth century three great religious leaders, imbued with the spirit of reform, arose in the church: Dunstan, archbishop of Canterbury (d. 988), Athelwold, bishop of Winchester (d. 984), and Oswald, bishop of Worcester and archbishop of York (d. 992). With the sympathetic support of King Edgar these men effected a genuine revival of monasticism in England. The true conception of the monastic life was inseparable from the observance of the Benedictine Rule. Almost everywhere in England this had ceased to be adhered to. As the first step in the reform the secular clergy were turned out of the monasteries and

their places filled by monks pledged to the threefold vow of chastity, obedience, and poverty. In their work of restoration the reformers received powerful support from the example of continental monasteries, notably those at Fleury and Ghent. These had recently undergone a similar reformation under the inspiring leadership of Cluny, where in 910 a community had been established on even stricter lines than those originally laid down by St. Benedict. Dunstan had spent some time at the Abbey of Blandinium at Ghent; Oswald had studied the system at Fleury; and Athelwold, although wanting to go himself, had sent a representative to Fleury for the same purpose. On the pattern of these continental houses a number of important monasteries were recreated in England, and Athelwold prepared a version of the Benedictine Rule, known as the *Concordia Regularis*, to bring about a general uniformity in their organization and observances. The effort toward reform extended to other divisions of the church, indeed to a general reformation of morals, and brought about something like a religious revival in the island. One of the objects of special concern in this work of rehabilitation was the improvement of education—the establishment of schools and the encouragement of learning among the monks and the clergy. The results were distinctly gratifying. By the close of the century the monasteries were once more centers of literary activity. Works in English for the popularizing of knowledge were prepared by men who thus continued the example of King Alfred, and manuscripts both in Latin and the vernacular were copied and preserved. It is significant that the four great codices in which the bulk of Old English poetry is preserved date from this period. We doubtless owe their existence to the reform movement.

64. *Influence of the Benedictine Reform on English.*

The influence of Latin upon the English language rose and fell with the fortunes of the church and the state of learning so intimately connected with it. As a result of the renewed literary activity just described, a new series of Latin importations took place. These differed somewhat from the earlier Christian borrowings in being words of a less popular kind and expressing more often ideas of a scientific and learned character. They are especially frequent in the works of Ælfric and reflect not only the theological and pedagogical nature of his writings but also his classical tastes and attainments. His literary activity and his vocabulary are equally representative of the movement. As in the earlier Christian borrowings a considerable number of words have to do with religious matters: *alb*, *Antichrist*, *antiphoner*, *apostle*, *canticle*, *cantor*, *cell*, *chrism*, *cloister*, *collect*, *creed*, *dalmatic*, *demon*, *dirge*, *font*, *idol*, *nocturn*, *prime*, *prophet*, *sabbath*, *synagogue*, *troper*. But we miss the group of words relating to everyday life characteristic of the earlier period. Literary and learned words predominate. Of the former kind are *accent*, *brief* (the verb), *decline* (as a term of grammar), *history*, *paper*, *pumice*, *quatern* (a quire or gathering of leaves in a book), *term(inus)*, *title*. A great number of plant names are recorded in this period. Many of them are familiar only to readers of old herbals. Some of the better known include *celandine*, *centaury*, *coriander*, *cucumber*, *ginger*,

hellebore, *lovage*, *periwinkle*, *petersili* (parsley), *verbena*.¹² A few names of trees might be added, such as *cedar*, *cypress*, *fig*, *laurel*, and *magdāla* (almond).¹³ Medical terms, like *cancer*, *circulād* (shingles), *paralysis*, *scrofula*, *plaster*, and words relating to the animal kingdom, like *aspide* (viper), *camel*, *lamprey*, *scorpion*, *tiger*, belong apparently to the same category of learned and literary borrowings. It would be possible to extend these lists considerably by including words that were taken over in their foreign form and not assimilated. Such words as *epactas*, *corporale*, *confessores*, *columba* (dove), *columne*, *cathedra*, *catacumbas*, *apostata*, *apocalipsin*, *acolutus*, *absolutionem*, *invitatorium*, *unguentum*, *cristalla*, *cometa*, *bissexte*, *bibliotheca*, *basilica*, *adamans*, and *prologus* show at once by their form their foreign character. Although many of them were later reintroduced into the language, they do not constitute an integral part of the vocabulary at this time. In general, the later borrowings of the Christian period come through books. An occasional word assigned to this later period may have been in use earlier, but there is nothing in the form to indicate it, and in the absence of any instance of its use in the literature before Alfred it is safer to put such borrowings in the latter part of the Old English period.

65. The Application of Native Words to New Concepts.

The words that Old English borrowed in this period are only a partial indication of the extent to which the introduction of Christianity affected the lives and thoughts of the English people. The English did not always adopt a foreign word to express a new concept. Often an old word was applied to a new thing and by a slight adaptation made to express a new meaning. The Anglo-Saxons, for example, did not borrow the Latin word *deus*, because their own word *God* was a satisfactory equivalent. Likewise *heaven* and *hell* express conceptions not unknown to Anglo-Saxon paganism and are consequently English words. *Patriarch* was rendered literally by *hēahfēder* (high father), *prophet* by *wītega* (wise one), *martyr* often by the native word *brōwere* (one who suffers pain), and saint by *hālg* (holy one). Specific members of the church organization such as *pope*, *bishop*, and *priest*, or *monk* and *abbot* represented individuals for which the English had no equivalent and therefore borrowed the Latin terms; however they did not borrow a general word for clergy but used a native expression, *ðæt gāstlice folc* (the spiritual folk). The word *Easter* is a Germanic word taken over from a pagan festival, likewise in the spring, in honor of Eostre, the goddess of dawn. Instead of borrowing the Latin word *praedicāre* (to preach) the English expressed the idea with words of their own, such as *læran* (to teach) or *bodian* (to bring a message); to pray (L. *precāre*) was rendered by *biddan* (to ask) and other words of similar meaning, *prayer* by a word from the same

¹² A number of interesting words of this class have not survived in modern usage, such as *aprotane* (wormwood), *armelu* (wild rue), *caric* (dry fig), *elehtre* (lupin), *mārūfie* (horehound), *nepte* (catnip), *pollegie* (pennyroyal), *hymele* (hop-plant).

¹³ Most of these words were apparently bookish at this time and had to be reintroduced later from French.

root, *gebed*. For *baptize* (L. *baptizāre*) the English adapted a native word *fullian* (to consecrate) while its derivative *fulluht* renders the noun *baptism*. The latter word enters into numerous compounds, such as *fulluhtbæp* (font), *fulwere* (baptist), *fulluht-fæder* (baptizer), *fulluht-hād* (baptismal vow), *fulluht-nama* (Christian name), *fulluht-stōw* (baptistry), *fulluht-tīd* (baptism time), and others. Even so individual a feature of the Christian faith as the sacrament of the Lord's Supper was expressed by the Germanic word *hūsl* (modern *house*), while *lāc*, the general word for sacrifice to the gods, was also sometimes applied to the Sacrifice of the Mass. The term *Scriptures* found its exact equivalent in the English word *gewritu*, and *ēvangelium* was rendered by *godspell*, originally meaning good tidings. *Trinity* (L. *.trinitas*) was translated *þrines* (three-ness), the idea of God the Creator was expressed by *scieppend* (one who shapes or forms), *fruma* (creator, founder), or *metod* (measurer). Native words like *fæder* (father), *dryhten* (prince), *wealdend* (ruler), *þēoden* (prince), *weard* (ward, protector), *hlāford* (lord) are frequent synonyms. Most of them are also applied to *Christ*, originally a Greek word and the most usual name for the Second Person of the Trinity, but *Hælend* (Savior) is also commonly employed. The Third Person (Spiritus Sanctus) was translated *Hālig Gāst* (Holy Ghost). Latin *diabolus* was borrowed as *dēofol* (devil) but we find *fēond* (fiend) as a common synonym. Examples might be multiplied. Cross is *rōd* (rod), *trēow* (tree), *gealga* (gallows), etc.; resurrection is *āerist*, from *ārisan* (to arise); *peccatum* is *synn* (sin), while other words like *mān*, *fīren*, *leahtor*, *wōh*, and *scyld*, meaning 'vice', 'crime', 'fault', and the like, are commonly substituted. The Judgment Day is *Doomsday*. Many of these words are translations of their Latin equivalents and their vitality is attested by the fact that in a great many cases they have continued in use down to the present day. It is important to recognize that the significance of a foreign influence is not to be measured simply by the foreign words introduced but is revealed also by the extent to which it stimulates the language to independent creative effort and causes it to make full use of its native resources.

66. The Extent of the Influence.

To be sure, the extent of a foreign influence is most readily seen in the number of words borrowed. As a result of the Christianizing of Britain some 450 Latin words appear in English writings before the close of the Old English period. This number does not include derivatives or proper names, which in the case of biblical names are very numerous. But about 100 of these were purely learned or retained so much of their foreign character as hardly to be considered part of the English vocabulary. Of the 350 words that have a right to be so considered, some did not make their way into general use until later—were, in fact, reintroduced later. On the other hand, a large number of them were fully accepted and thoroughly incorporated into the language. The real test of a foreign influence is the degree to which the words that it brought in were assimilated. This is not merely a question of the power to survive; it is a question of how completely the words were digested and became indistinguishable from the native word-stock, so that they could enter into compounds and be made into other parts of speech, just like native words. When, for example, the Latin noun *planta* comes into English as the noun *plant* and later

is made into a verb by the addition of the infinitive ending *-ian* (*plantian*) and other inflectional elements, we may feel sure that the word has been assimilated. This happened in a number of cases as in *gemartyrian* (to martyr), *sealmian* (to play on the harp), *culpian* (to humiliate oneself), *fersian* (to versify), *glēsan* (to gloss), and *crispian* (to curl). Assimilation is likewise indicated by the use of native formative suffixes such as *-dōm*, *-hād*, *-ung* to make a concrete noun into an abstract (*martyrdōm*, *martyrhād*, *martyrung*). The Latin influence of the Second Period was not only extensive but thorough and marks the real beginning of the English habit of freely incorporating foreign elements into its vocabulary.

67. *The Scandinavian Influence: The Viking Age.*

Near the end of the Old English period English underwent a third foreign influence, the result of contact with another important language, the Scandinavian. In the course of history it is not unusual to witness the spectacle of a nation or people, through causes too remote or complex for analysis, suddenly emerging from obscurity, playing for a time a conspicuous, often brilliant, part, and then, through causes equally difficult to define, subsiding once more into a relatively minor sphere of activity. Such a phenomenon is presented by the Germanic inhabitants of the Scandinavian peninsula and Denmark, one-time neighbors of the Anglo-Saxons and closely related to them in language and blood. For some centuries the Scandinavians had remained quietly in their northern home. But in the eighth century a change, possibly economic, possibly political, occurred in this area and provoked among them a spirit of unrest and adventurous enterprise. They began a series of attacks upon all the lands adjacent to the North Sea and the Baltic. Their activities began in plunder and ended in conquest. The Swedes established a kingdom in Russia; Norwegians colonized parts of the British Isles, the Faroes, and Iceland, and from there pushed on to Greenland and the coasts of Labrador and Newfoundland; the Danes founded the dukedom of Normandy and finally conquered England. The pinnacle of their achievement was reached in the beginning of the eleventh century when Cnut, king of Denmark, obtained the throne of England, conquered Norway, and from his English capital ruled the greater part of the Scandinavian world. The daring sea rovers to whom these unusual achievements were due are commonly known as Vikings,¹⁴ and the period of their activity, extending from the middle of the eighth century to the beginning of the eleventh, is popularly known as the Viking Age. It was to their attacks upon, settlements in, and ultimate conquest of England that the Scandinavian influence upon Old English was due.

¹⁴ The term *viking* is usually thought to be derived from Old Norse *vīk*, a bay, as indicating "one who came out from, or frequented, inlets of the sea." It may, however, come from OE *wīc*, a camp, "the formation of temporary encampments being a prominent feature of viking raids" (*OED*).

68. The Scandinavian Invasions of England.

In the Scandinavian attacks upon England three well-marked stages can be distinguished. The first is the period of early raids, beginning according to the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle in 787 and continuing with some intermissions until about 850. The raids of this period were simply plundering attacks upon towns and monasteries near the coast. Sacred vessels of gold and silver, jeweled shrines, costly robes, and valuables of all kinds were carried off, and English people were captured to be made slaves. Noteworthy instances are the sacking of Lindisfarne and Jarrow in 793 and 794. But with the plundering of these two famous monasteries the attacks apparently ceased for forty years, until renewed in 834 along the southern coast and in East Anglia. These early raids were apparently the work of small isolated bands.

The second stage is the work of large armies and is marked by widespread plundering in all parts of the country and by extensive settlements. This new development was inaugurated by the arrival in 850 of a Danish fleet of 350 ships. Their pirate crews wintered in the isle of Thanet and the following spring captured Canterbury and London and ravaged the surrounding country. Although defeated by a West Saxon army, they soon renewed their attacks. In 866 a large Danish army plundered East Anglia and in 867 captured York. In 869 the East Anglian king, Edmund, met a cruel death in resisting the invaders. The incident made a deep impression on all England, and the memory of his martyrdom was vividly preserved in English tradition for nearly two centuries. The eastern part of England was now largely in the hands of the Danes, and they began turning their attention to Wessex. The assault upon Wessex began shortly before the accession of King Alfred (871–899). Even the greatness of this greatest of English kings threatened to prove insufficient to withstand the repeated attacks of the Northmen. After seven years of resistance, in which temporary victories were invariably succeeded by fresh defeats, Alfred was forced to take refuge with a small band of personal followers in the marshes of Somerset. But in this darkest hour for the fortunes of the English, Alfred's courage and persistence triumphed. With a fresh levy of men from Somerset, Wiltshire, and Hampshire, he suddenly attacked the Danish army under Guthrum at Ethandun (now Edington, in Wiltshire). The result was an overwhelming victory for the English and a capitulation by the Danes (878).

The Treaty of Wedmore (near Glastonbury), which was signed by Alfred and Guthrum the same year, marks the culmination of the second stage in the Danish invasions. Wessex was saved. The Danes withdrew from Alfred's territory. But they were not compelled to leave England. The treaty merely defined the line, running roughly from Chester to London, to the east of which the foreigners were henceforth to remain. This territory was to be subject to Danish law and is hence known as the Danelaw. In addition the Danes agreed to accept Christianity, and Guthrum was baptized. This last provision was important. It might secure the better observance of the treaty, and, what was more important, it would help to pave the way for the ultimate fusion of the two groups.

The third stage of the Scandinavian incursions covers the period of political adjustment and assimilation from 878 to 1042. The Treaty of Wedmore did not put an end to Alfred's troubles. Guthrum was inclined to break faith, and there were fresh

invasions from outside. But the situation slowly began to clear. Under Alfred's son Edward the Elder (900–925) and grandson Athelstan (925–939) the English began a series of counterattacks that put the Danes on the defensive. One of the brilliant victories of the English in this period was Athelstan's triumph in 937 in the battle of Brunanburh, over a combined force of Danes and Scots, a victory celebrated in one of the finest of Old English poems. By the middle of the century a large part of eastern England, though still strongly Danish in blood and custom, was once more under English rule.

Toward the end of the century, however, when England seemed at last on the point of solving its Danish problem, a new and formidable succession of invasions began. In 991 a substantial Viking fleet, which may have been under the command of Olaf Tryggvason, attacked and pillaged various towns along the southeast coast of England. It then sailed up the Blackwater to the vicinity of Maldon, where it was met by Byrhtnoth, the valiant earl of the East Saxons, in a battle celebrated in another famous Old English war poem, *The Battle of Maldon*. Here the English, heroic in defeat, lost their leader, and soon the invaders were being bribed by large sums to refrain from plunder. The invasions now began to assume an official character. In 994 Olaf, who shortly became king of Norway, was joined by Svein, king of Denmark, in a new attack on London. The sums necessary to buy off the enemy became greater and greater, rising in 1012 to the amazing figure of £48,000. In each case the truce thus bought was temporary, and Danish forces were soon again marching over England, murdering and pillaging. Finally Svein determined to make himself king of the country. In 1014, supported by his son Cnut, he crowned a series of victories in different parts of England by driving Æthelred, the English king, into exile and seizing the throne. Upon his sudden death the same year his son succeeded him. Three years of fighting established Cnut's claim to the throne, and for the next twenty-five years England was ruled by Danish kings.

69. The Settlement of the Danes in England.

The events here rapidly summarized had as an important consequence the settlement of large numbers of Scandinavians in England. However temporary may have been the stay of many of the attacking parties, especially those that in the beginning came simply to plunder, many individuals remained behind when their ships returned home. Often they became permanent settlers in the island. Some indication of their number may be had from the fact that more than 1,400 places in England bear Scandinavian names. Most of these are naturally in the north and east of England, the district of the Danelaw, for it was here that the majority of the invaders settled. Most of the new inhabitants were Danes, although there were considerable Norwegian settlements in the northwest, especially in what is now Cumbria, and in a few of the northern counties. The presence of a large Scandinavian element in the population is indicated not merely by placenames but by peculiarities of manorial organization, local government, legal procedure, and the like. Thus we have to do not merely with large bands of marauders, marching and countermarching across England, carrying hardship and devastation into all parts of the country for upward of two centuries, but also with an extensive peaceable settlement by farmers who intermarried with the English, adopted many of their customs, and entered into the everyday life of the community. In the districts where such settlements took

place, conditions were favorable for an extensive Scandinavian influence on the English language.

70. The Amalgamation of the Two Peoples.

The amalgamation of the two peoples was greatly facilitated by the close kinship that existed between them. The problem of the English was not the assimilation of an alien people representing an alien culture and speaking a wholly foreign tongue. The policy of the English kings in the period when they were reestablishing their control over the Danelaw was to accept as an established fact the mixed population of the district and to devise a *modus vivendi* for its component elements. In this effort they were aided by the natural adaptability of the Scandinavian. Generations of contact with foreign communities, into which their many enterprises had brought them, had made the Scandinavians a cosmopolitan people. The impression derived from a study of early English institutions is that in spite of certain native customs that the Danes continued to observe, they assimilated to most of the ways of English life. That many of them early accepted Christianity is attested by the large number of Scandinavian names found not only among monks and abbots, priests and bishops, but also among those who gave land to monasteries and endowed churches. It would be a great mistake to think of the relation between Anglo-Saxon and Dane, especially in the tenth century, as uniformly hostile. One must distinguish, as we have said, between the predatory bands that continued to traverse the country and the large numbers that were settled peacefully on the land. Alongside the ruins of English towns—Symeon of Durham reports that the city of Carlisle remained uninhabited for 200 years after its destruction by the Danes—there existed important communities established by the newcomers. They seem to have grouped themselves at first in concentrated centers, parceling out large tracts of land from which the owners had fled, and preferring this form of settlement to too scattered a distribution in a strange land. Among such centers the Five Boroughs—Lincoln, Stamford, Leicester, Derby, and Nottingham—became important *foci* of Scandinavian influence. It was but a question of time until these large centers and the multitude of smaller communities where the Northmen gradually settled were absorbed into the general mass of the English population.

71. The Relation of the Two Languages.

The relation between the two languages in the district settled by the Danes is a matter of inference rather than exact knowledge. Doubtless the situation was similar to that observable in numerous parts of the world today where people speaking different languages are found living side by side in the same region. Although in some places the

Scandinavians gave up their language early¹⁵ there were certainly communities in which Danish or Norse remained for some time the usual language. Up until the time of the Norman Conquest the Scandinavian language in England was constantly being renewed by the steady stream of trade and conquest. In some parts of Scotland, Norse was still spoken as late as the seventeenth century. In other districts in which the prevailing speech was English there were doubtless many of the newcomers who continued to speak their own language at least as late as 1100 and a considerable number who were to a greater or lesser degree bilingual. The last-named circumstance is rendered more likely by the frequent intermarriage between the two peoples and by the similarity between the two tongues. The Anglian dialect resembled the language of the Northmen in a number of particulars in which West Saxon showed divergence. The two may even have been mutually intelligible to a limited extent. Contemporary statements on the subject are conflicting, and it is difficult to arrive at a conviction. But wherever the truth lies in this debatable question, there can be no doubt that the basis existed for an extensive interaction of the two languages upon each other, and this conclusion is amply borne out by the large number of Scandinavian elements subsequently found in English.

72. *The Tests of Borrowed Words.*

The similarity between Old English and the language of the Scandinavian invaders makes it at times very difficult to decide whether a given word in Modern English is a native or a borrowed word. Many of the more common words of the two languages were identical, and if we had no Old English literature from the period before the Danish invasions, we should be unable to say that many words were not of Scandinavian origin. In certain cases, however, we have very reliable criteria by which we can recognize a borrowed word. These tests are not such as the lay person can generally apply, although occasionally they are sufficiently simple. The most reliable depend upon differences in the development of certain sounds in the North Germanic and West Germanic areas. One of the simplest to recognize is the development of the sound *sk*. In Old English this was early palatalized to *sh* (written *sc*), except possibly in the combination *scr*, whereas in the Scandinavian countries it retained its hard *sk* sound. Consequently, while native words like *ship*, *shall*, *fish* have *sh* in Modern English, words borrowed from the Scandinavians are generally still pronounced with *sk*: *sky*, *skin*, *skill*, *scrape*, *scrub*, *bask*, *whisk*. The OE *scyrte* has become *shirt*, while the corresponding ON form *skyrta* gives us *skirt*. In the same way the retention of the hard pronunciation of *k* and *g* in such words as *kid*, *dike*¹⁶ (cf. *ditch*), *get*, *give*, *gild*, and *egg* is an indication of Scandinavian origin. Occasionally, though not very often, the vowel of a word gives clear proof of borrowing. For example,

¹⁵ On this question see E.Ekwall, "How Long Did the Scandinavian Language Survive in England?" *Jespersen Miscellany*, pp. 17–30, and R.I.Page, "How Long Did the Scandinavian Language Survive in England? The Epigraphical Evidence," in *England Before the Conquest: Studies in Primary Sources Presented to Dorothy Whitelock*, ed. P.Clemons and K.Hughes (Cambridge, UK, 1971), pp. 165–81.

the Germanic diphthong *ai* becomes *ā* in Old English (and has become *ō* in Modern English) but became *ei* or *ē* in Old Scandinavian. Thus *aye*, *nay* (beside *no* from the native word), *hale* (cf. the English form (*w*)*hole*), *reindeer*, and *swain* are borrowed words, and many more examples can be found in Middle English and in the modern dialects. Thus there existed in Middle English the forms *geit*, *gait*, which are from Scandinavian, beside *gāt*, *gōt* from the OE word. The native word has survived in Modern English *goat*. In the same way the Scandinavian word for *loathsome* existed in Middle English as *leiþ*, *laiþ* beside *lāþ*, *lōþ*. Such tests as these, based on sound-developments in the two languages, are the most reliable means of distinguishing Scandinavian from native words. But occasionally meaning gives a fairly reliable test. Thus our word *bloom* (flower) could come equally well from OE *blōma* or Scandinavian *blōm*. But the OE word meant an 'ingot of iron', whereas the Scandinavian word meant 'flower, bloom'. It happens that the Old English word has survived as a term in metallurgy, but it is the Old Norse word that has come down in ordinary use. Again, if the initial *g* in *gift* did not betray the Scandinavian origin of this word, we should be justified in suspecting it from the fact that the cognate OE word *gift* meant the 'price of a wife', and hence in the plural 'marriage', whereas the ON word had the more general sense of 'gift, present'. The word *plow* in Old English meant a measure of land, in Scandinavian the agricultural implement, which in Old English was called a *sulh*. When neither the form of a word nor its meaning proves its Scandinavian origin we can never be sure that we are dealing with a borrowed word. The fact that an original has not been preserved in Old English is no proof that such an original did not exist. Nevertheless when a word appears in Middle English that cannot be traced to an Old English source but for which an entirely satisfactory original exists in Old Norse, and when that word occurs chiefly in texts written in districts where Danish influence was strong, or when it has survived in dialectal use in these districts today, the probability that we have here a borrowed word is fairly strong. In every case final judgment must rest upon a careful consideration of all the factors involved.

73. *Scandinavian Place-Names.*

Among the most notable evidences of the extensive Scandinavian settlement in England is the large number of places that bear Scandinavian names. When we find more than 600 places like *Grimsby*, *Whitby*, *Derby*, *Rugby*, and *Thoresby*, with names ending in *-by*, nearly all of them in the district occupied by the Danes, we have a striking evidence of the number of Danes who settled in England. For these names all contain the Danish word *by*, meaning 'farm' or 'town', a word that is also seen in our word *by-law* (town law). Some 300 names like *Althorp*, *Bishopsthorpe*, *Gawthorpe*, and *Linthorpe* contain the Scandinavian word *thorp* (village). An almost equal number contain the word *thwaite*

¹⁶ The *k* in this could be accounted for on the basis of the oblique cases, but it is more probably due to Scandinavian influence. It is possible that the retention of the hard *k* and *g* is due to Anglian rather than Scandinavian tendencies.

(an isolated piece of land)—*Applethwaite*, *Braithwaite*, *Cowperthwaite*, *Langthwaite*, *Satterthwaite*. About a hundred places bear names ending in *toft* (a piece of ground, a messuage)—*Brimtoft*, *Eastoft*, *Langtoft*, *Lowestoft*, *Nortoft*. Numerous other Scandinavian elements enter into English place-names, which need not be particularized here. It is apparent that these elements were commonplace in the speech of the people of the Danelaw. It has been remarked above that more than 1,400 Scandinavian place-names have been counted in England, and the number will undoubtedly be increased when a more careful survey of the material has been made. These names are not uniformly distributed over the Danelaw. The largest number are found in Yorkshire and Lincolnshire. In some districts in these counties as many as 75 percent of the place-names are of Scandinavian origin. Cumbria contributes a large number, reflecting the extensive Norse settlements in the northwest, while Norfolk, with a fairly large representation, shows that the Danes were numerous in at least this part of East Anglia. It may be remarked that a similarly high percentage of Scandinavian personal names has been found in the medieval records of these districts. Names ending in *-son*, like *Stevenson* or *Johnson*, conform to a characteristic Scandinavian custom, the equivalent of Old English patronymic being *-ing*, as in *Browning*.

74. *The Earliest Borrowing.*

The extent of this influence on English place-nomenclature would lead us to expect a large infiltration of other words into the vocabulary. But we should not expect this infiltration to show itself at once. The early relations of the invaders with the English were too hostile to lead to much natural intercourse, and we must allow time for such words as the Anglo-Saxons learned from their enemies to find their way into literature. The number of Scandinavian words that appear in Old English is consequently small, amounting to only about two score. The largest single group of these is such as would be associated with a sea-roving and predatory people. Words like *barda* (beaked ship), *cnearr* (small warship), *scegb* (vessel), *lip* (fleet), *scegbmann* (pirate), *dreng* (warrior), *hā* (oarlock) and *hā-sēta* (rower in a warship), *bātswegen* (boatman, source of Modern English *boatswain*), *hofding* (chief, ringleader), *orrest* (battle), *rān* (robbery, rapine), and *fylcian* (to collect or marshal a force) show in what respects the invaders chiefly impressed the English. A little later we find a number of words relating to the law or characteristic of the social and administrative system of the Danelaw. The word *law* itself is of Scandinavian origin, as is the word *outlaw*. The word *māl* (action at law), *hold* (freeholder), *wapentake* (an administrative district), *hūsting* (assembly), and *riding* (originally *thriding*, one of the former divisions of Yorkshire) owe their use to the Danes. In addition to these, a number of genuine Old English words seem to be translations of Scandinavian terms: *bōtlēas* (what cannot be compensated), *hāmsōcn* (attacking an enemy in his house), *lahcēap* (payment for reentry into lost legal rights), *landcēap* (tax paid when land was bought) are examples of such translations.¹⁷ English legal

¹⁷ Cf. E. Björkman, *Scandinavian Loan-words in Middle English* (Halle, Germany, 1900–1902), p. 12.

terminology underwent a complete reshaping after the Norman Conquest, and most of these words have been replaced now by terms from the French. But their temporary existence in the language is an evidence of the extent to which Scandinavian customs entered into the life of the districts in which the Danes were numerous.

75. Scandinavian Loanwords and Their Character.

It was after the Danes had begun to settle down peaceably in the island and enter into the ordinary relations of life with the English that Scandinavian words began to

enter in numbers into the language. If we examine the bulk of these words with a view to dividing them into classes and thus discovering in what domains of thought or experience the Danes contributed especially to English culture and therefore to the English language, we shall not arrive at any significant result. The Danish invasions were not like the introduction of Christianity, bringing the English into contact with a different civilization and introducing them to many things, physical as well as spiritual, that they had not known before. The civilization of the invaders was very much like that of the English themselves. Consequently the Scandinavian elements that entered the English language are such as would make their way into it through the give-and-take of everyday life. Their character can best be conveyed by a few examples, arranged simply in alphabetical order. Among nouns that came in are *axle-tree, band, bank, birth, boon, booth, brink, bull, calf* (of leg), *crook, dirt, down* (feathers), *dregs, egg, fellow, freckle, gait, gap, girth, guess, hap, keel, kid, leg, link, loan, mire, race, reef* (of sail), *reindeer, rift, root, scab, scales, score, scrap, seat, sister, skill, skin, skirt, sky, slaughter, snare, stack, steak, swain, thrift, tidings, trust, want, window*. The list has been made somewhat long in order to better illustrate the varied and yet simple character of the borrowings. Among adjectives we find *awkward, flat, ill, loose, low, meek, muggy, odd, rotten, rugged, scant, seemly, sly, tattered, tight, and weak*. There are also a surprising number of common verbs among the borrowings, like *to bait, bask, batten, call, cast, clip, cow, crave, crawl, die, droop, egg* (on), *flit, gape, gasp, get, give, glitter, kindle, lift, lug, nag, raise, rake, ransack, rid, rive, scare, scout* (an idea), *scowl, screech, snub, sprint, take, thrive, thrust*. Lists such as these suggest better than any explanation the familiar, everyday character of the words that the Scandinavian invasions and subsequent settlement brought into English.

76. The Relation of Borrowed and Native Words.

It will be seen from the words in the above lists that in many cases the new words could have supplied no real need in the English vocabulary. They made their way into English simply as the result of the mixture of the two peoples. The Scandinavian and the English words were being used side by side, and the survival of one or the other must often have been a matter of chance. Under such circumstances a number of things might happen. (1) Where words in the two languages coincided more or less in form and meaning, the modern word stands at the same time for both its English and its Scandinavian ancestors.

Examples of such words are *burn*, *cole*, *drag*, *fast*, *gang*, *murk(y) scrape*, *thick*. (2) Where there were differences of form, the English word often survived. Beside such English words as *bench*, *goat*, *heathen*, *yarn*, *few*, *grey*, *loath*, *leap*, *flay*, corresponding Scandinavian forms are found quite often in Middle English literature and in some cases still exist in dialectal use. We find *screde*, *skelle*, *skere* with the hard pronunciation of the initial consonant group beside the standard English *shred*, *shell*, *sheer*; *wae* beside *woe*, the surviving form except in *welaway*; *trigg* the Old Norse equivalent of OE *trēowe* (true). Again where the same idea was expressed by different words in the two languages it was often, as we should expect, the English word that lived on. We must remember that the area in which the two languages existed for a time side by side was confined to the northern and eastern half of England. Examples are the Scandinavian words *attlen* beside English *think* (in the sense of *purpose*, *intend*), *bolnen* beside *swell*, *tinen* (ON *týna*) beside *lose*, *site* (ON **sýt*) beside *sorrow*, *roke* (fog) beside *mist*, *reike* beside *path*. (3) In other cases the Scandinavian word replaced the native word, often after the two had long remained in use concurrently. Our word *awe* from Scandinavian, and its cognate *eye* (*aye*) from Old English are both found in the *Ormulum* (c. 1200). In the earlier part of the Middle English period the English word is more common, but by 1300 the Scandinavian form begins to appear with increasing frequency and finally replaces the Old English word. The two forms must have been current in the everyday speech of the northeast for several centuries, until finally the pronunciation *awe* prevailed. The Old English form is not found after the fourteenth century. The same thing happened with the two words for egg, *ey* (English) and *egg* (Scandinavian). Caxton complains at the close of the fifteenth century (see the passage quoted in § 151) that it was hard even then to know which to use. In the words *sister* (ON *syster*, OE *sweostor*), *boon* (ON *bōn*, OE *bēn*) *loan* (ON *lān*, OE *lāen*), *weak* (ON *veikr*, OE *wāc*) the Scandinavian form lived. Often a good Old English word was lost, since it expressed the same idea as the foreign word. Thus the verb *take* replaced the OE *niman*;¹⁸ *cast* superseded the OE *weorpan*, while it has itself been largely displaced now by *throw*; *cut* took the place of OE *snīðan* and *ceorfan*, which survives as *carve*. Old English had several words for *anger* (ON *angr*), including *torn*, *grama*, and *irre*, but the Old Norse word prevailed. In the same way the Scandinavian word *bark* replaced OE *rind*, *wing* replaced OE *feþra*, *sky* took the place of *ūprodor* and *wolcen* (the latter now being preserved only in the poetical word *welkin*), and *window* (=wind-eye) drove out the equally appropriate English word *ēagbȳrel* (eye-thirl, i.e., eye-hole; cf. *nostril*=nose thirl, nose hole). (4) Occasionally both the English and the Scandinavian words were retained with a difference of meaning or use, as in the following pairs (the English word is given first): *no*—*nay*,

¹⁸ For a detailed study, see Alarik Rynell, *The Rivalry of Scandinavian and Native Synonyms in Middle English, especially taken and nimen*... (Lund, 1948; *Lund Studies in English*, vol. 13).

whole—hale, rear—raise, from—fro, craft—skill, hide—skin, sick—ill. (5) In certain cases a native word that was apparently not in common use was reinforced, if not reintroduced, from the Scandinavian. In this way we must account for such words as *till, dale, rim, blend, run*, and the Scottish *bairn*. (6) Finally, the English word might be modified, taking on some of the character of the corresponding Scandinavian word. *Give* and *get* with their hard *g* are examples, as are *scatter* beside *shatter*, and *Thursday* instead of the OE *Thunresdæg*. Some confusion must have existed in the Danish area between the Scandinavian and the English form of many words, a confusion that is clearly betrayed in the survival of such hybrid forms as *shriek* and *screech*. All this merely goes to show that in the Scandinavian influence on the English language we have to do with the intimate mingling of two tongues. The results are just what we should expect when two rather similar languages are spoken for upwards of two centuries in the same area.

77. Form Words.

If further evidence were needed of the intimate relation that existed between the two languages, it would be found in the fact that the Scandinavian words that made their way into English were not confined to nouns and adjectives and verbs but extended to pronouns, prepositions, adverbs, and even a part of the verb *to be*. Such parts of speech are not often transferred from one language to another. The pronouns *they, their, and them* are Scandinavian. Old English used *hīe, hiera, him* (see § 45). Possibly the Scandinavian words were felt to be less subject to confusion with forms of the singular. Moreover, though these are the most important, they are not the only Scandinavian pronouns to be found in English. A late Old English inscription contains the Old Norse form *hanum* for *him*. *Both* and *same*, though not primarily pronouns, have pronominal uses and are of Scandinavian origin. The preposition *till* was at one time widely used in the sense of *to*, besides having its present meaning; and *fro*, likewise in common use formerly as the equivalent of *from*, survives in the phrase *to and fro*. Both words are from the Scandinavian. From the same source comes the modern form of the conjunction *though*, the Old Norse equivalent of OE *þēah*. The Scandinavian use of *at* as a sign of the infinitive is to be seen in the English *ado* (*at-do*) and was more widely used in this construction in Middle English. The adverbs *aloft, athwart, aye* (ever), and *seemly*, and the earlier *heþen* (hence) and *hwēþen* (whence), are all derived from the Scandinavian. Finally the present plural *are* of the verb *to be* is a most significant adoption. While *we aron* was the Old English form in the north, the West Saxon plural was *syndon* (cf. German *sind*), and the form *are* in Modern English undoubtedly owes its extension to the influence of the Danes. When we remember that in the expression *they are* both the pronoun and the verb are Scandinavian we realize once more how intimately the language of the invaders has entered into English.

78. *Scandinavian Influence outside the Standard Speech.*

We should miss the full significance of the Scandinavian influence if we failed to recognize the extent to which it is found outside the standard speech. Our older literature and the modern dialects are full of words that are not now in ordinary use. The ballads offer many examples. When the *Geste of Robin Hood* begins "Lythe and listin, gentilmen" it has for its first word an Old Norse synonym for *listen*. When a little later on the Sheriff of Nottingham says to Little John, "Say me no we, *wight* yonge man, What is now thy name?" he uses the ON *vigt* (strong, courageous). In the ballad of *Captain Car* the line "*Busk and bowne*, my merry men all" contains two words from the same source meaning *prepare*. The word *gar*, meaning *to cause or make one do something*, is of frequent occurrence. Thus, in *Chevy Chase* we are told of Douglas' men that "Many a doughetë the(y) *garde* to dy"—that is, they made many a doughty man die. In *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne* the Virgin Mary is addressed: "Ah, deere Lady! sayd Robin Hoode, Thou art both mother and *may*!" in which *may* is a Scandinavian form for *maid*. Bessie Bell and Mary Gray, in the ballad of that name, "*bigget* a bower on yon burn-brae," employing in the process another word of Norse origin, *biggen* (to build), a word also used by Burns in *To a Mouse*: "Thy wee bit housie, too, in ruin!...And naething now to big a new ane." In Burns and Scott we find the comparative *worse* in the form *waur*: "A' the warld kens that they maun either marry or do waur" (*Old Mortality*), also an old word (ON *verre*) more commonly found in the form used by Chaucer in the *Book of the Duchess*: "Allas! how myghte I fare werre?" Examples could be multiplied, but it is sufficiently evident that there is much Scandinavian material in the dialects besides what has found its way into the standard speech.

79. *Effect on Grammar and Syntax.*

That the Scandinavian influence not only affected the vocabulary but also extended to matters of grammar and syntax as well is less capable of exact demonstration but is hardly to be doubted. Inflections are seldom transferred from one language to another. A certain number of inflectional elements peculiar to the Northumbrian dialect have been attributed to Scandinavian influence,¹⁹ among others the -s of the third person singular, present indicative, of verbs and the participial ending -*and* (*bindand*), corresponding to -*end* and -*ind* in the Midlands and South, and now replaced by -*ing*. The words *scant*, *want*, *athwart* preserve in the

¹⁹ W. Keller, "Skandinavischer Einfluss in der englischen Flexion," *Probleme der englischen Sprache und Kultur: Festschrift Johannes Hoops* (Heidelberg, 1925), pp. 80–87.

final *t* the neuter adjective ending of Old Norse. But this is of no great significance. It is much more important to recognize that in many words the English and Scandinavian languages differed chiefly in their inflectional elements. The body of the word was so nearly the same in the two languages that only the endings would put obstacles in the way of mutual understanding. In the mixed population that existed in the Danelaw these endings must have led to much confusion, tending gradually to become obscured and finally lost. It seems but natural that the tendency toward the loss of inflections, which was characteristic of the English language in the north even in Old English times, was strengthened and accelerated by the conditions that prevailed in the Danelaw, and that some credit must be given the Danes for a development that, spreading to other parts and being carried much farther, resulted after the Norman Conquest in so happily simplifying English grammar. Likewise, the way words are put together in phrases and clauses—what we call syntax—is something in which languages less often influence one another than in matters of vocabulary. The probability of such influence naturally varies with the degree of intimacy that exists between the speakers of two languages. In those parts of Pennsylvania—the “Pennsylvania Dutch” districts—where German and English have mingled in a jargon peculiar to itself, German turns of expression are frequently found in the English spoken there. It is quite likely that the English spoken in the districts where there were large numbers of Danes acquired certain Danish habits of expression. A modern Dane like Jespersen²⁰ notes that the omission of the relative pronoun in relative clauses (rare in Old English) and the retention or omission of the conjunction *that* are in conformity with Danish usage; that the rules for the use of *shall* and *will* in Middle English are much the same as in Scandinavian; and that some apparently illogical uses of these auxiliaries in Shakespeare (e.g., “besides it *should* appear” in the *Merchant of Venice*, III, ii, 289) do not seem strange to a Dane, who would employ the same verb. Logeman²¹ notes the tendency, common to both languages, to put a strong stress at times on the preposition and notes the occurrence of locutions such as “he has some one to work for” that are not shared by the other Germanic languages. It is possible, of course, that similarities such as these are merely coincidences, that the Scandinavian languages and English happened to develop in these respects along similar lines. But there is nothing improbable in the assumption that certain Scandinavian turns

²⁰ *Growth and Structure of the English Language*, 10th ed., pp. 76–77. Jespersen’s tentative speculations encounter problems described by E. Eitel, “Die dänischen Elemente in der Syntax der englischen Sprache,” *Anglia*, 29 (1906), 120–28. They also are unsupported by the earliest Danish and Norwegian usage as recorded in runic inscriptions. See Max S. Kirch, “Scandinavian Influence on English Syntax,” *PMLA*, 74 (1959), 503–10.

²¹ *Archiv für das Studium der neueren Sprachen*, 116 (1906), 281–86.

of phrase and certain particular usages should have found their way into the idiom of people in no small part Danish in descent and living in intimate contact with the speakers of a Scandinavian tongue.

80. *Period and Extent of the Influence.*

It is hardly possible to estimate the extent of the Scandinavian influence by the number of borrowed words that exist in Standard English. That number, if we restrict the list to those for which the evidence is fully convincing, is about 900. These, as the examples given above show, are almost always words designating common everyday things and fundamental concepts. To this group we should probably be justified in adding an equal number in which a Scandinavian origin is probable or in which the influence of Scandinavian forms has entered. Furthermore there are, according to Wright, the editor of the *English Dialect Dictionary*, thousands of Scandinavian words that are still a part of the everyday speech of people in the north and east of England and in a sense are just as much a part of the living language as those that are used in other parts of the country and have made their way into literature. He notes that "if we exclude all *sc-* words of various origins which are common to the standard language and the dialects, it is a remarkable fact that the *English Dialect Dictionary* contains 1,154 simple words beginning with *sc-* (*sk-*)."²² Locally, at least, the Scandinavian influence was tremendous. The period during which this large Danish element was making its way into the English vocabulary was doubtless the tenth and eleventh centuries. This was the period during which the merging of the two peoples was taking place. The occurrence of many of the borrowed words in written records is generally somewhat later. A considerable number first make their appearance in the *Ormulum* at the beginning of the thirteenth century. But we must attribute this fact to the scarcity of literary texts of an earlier date, particularly from the region of the Danelaw. Because of its extent and the intimate way in which the borrowed elements were incorporated, the Scandinavian influence is one of the most interesting of the foreign influences that have contributed to the English language.

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²² Joseph and Elizabeth M. Wright, *An Elementary Middle English Grammar*, p. 82.

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Knowledge," *Anglo-Saxon England*, 18 (1989), 149–206. The standard discussion of the Scandinavian element in English is E. Björkman's *Scandinavian Loan-words in Middle English* (Halle, 1900–1902), which may be supplemented by his "Zur dialektischen Provenienz der nordischen Lehnwörter im Englischen," *Språkvetenskapliga sällskapets i Upsala förhandlingar 1897–1900* (1901), pp. 1–28, and *Nordische Personnamen in England in alt-und frühmittelenglischer Zeit* (Halle, Germany, 1910). Earlier studies include A. Wall's "A Contribution towards the Study of the Scandinavian Element in the English Dialects," *Anglia*, 20 (1898), 45–135, and G. T. Flom's *Scandinavian Influence on Southern Lowland Scotch* (New York, 1900). More recent scholarship is surveyed by B. H. Hansen, "The Historical Implications of the Scandinavian Linguistic Element in English: A Theoretical Evaluation," *Nowele*, 4 (1984), 53–95. The Scandinavian influence on local nomenclature is extensively treated in H. Lindkvist's *Middle-English Place-Names of Scandinavian Origin*, part I (Uppsala, Sweden, 1912). Gillian Fellows-Jensen has published a valuable series of studies on place-names, including *Scandinavian Settlement Names in Yorkshire* (Copenhagen, 1972), and, in similar format, *Scandinavian Settlement Names in the East Midlands* (Copenhagen, 1978) and *Scandinavian Settlement Names in the North-West* (Copenhagen, 1985). The claims for Scandinavian influence on English grammar and syntax are set forth in the articles mentioned in footnotes to § 79. Much of this material is embodied in an excellent overall treatment by John Geipel, *The Viking Legacy: The Scandinavian Influence on the English and Gaelic Languages* (Newton Abbot, UK, 1971). Literary and historical relations between Anglo-Saxons and Vikings are treated in recent essays collected in John D. Niles and Mark Amodio, eds., *Anglo-Scandinavian England* (Lanham, MD, 1989) and in Donald Scragg, ed., *The Battle of Maldon AD 991* (Oxford, 1991).