



Assiut University
Faculty of Arts
Dept. of English

History of the English Language (2)

**For Fourth-Year Students,
Department of English,
Faculty of Arts**

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CHAPTER ONE

Evolution of English

The evolution of English in the 1,500 years of its existence in England has been an unbroken one. Within this development, however, it is possible to recognize three main periods. Like all divisions in history, the periods of the English language are matters of convenience and the dividing lines between them purely arbitrary. But within each of the periods it is possible to recognize certain broad characteristics and certain special developments that take place. The period from 450 to 1150 is known as Old English. It is sometimes described as the period of full inflections, because during most of this period the endings of the noun, the adjective, and the verb are preserved more or less unimpaired. From 1150 to 1500 the language is known as Middle English. During this period the inflections, which had begun to break down toward the end of the Old English period, become greatly reduced, and it is consequently known as the period of leveled inflections. The language since 1500 is called Modern English. By the time we reach this stage in the development a large part of the original inflectional system has disappeared entirely, and we therefore speak of it as the period of lost

inflections. The progressive decay of inflections is only one of the developments that mark the evolution of English in its various stages. In a course on the history of English, we have to discuss the features that are characteristic of Old English, Middle English, and Modern English.

When the Romans came to Britain, first under Julius Caesar in 55 B. C. and later under Claudius in 42 A. D., they found a race of Celtic people, the Britons, in occupation. These Britons resisted the Romans fiercely on the shores of south-east England but they were finally conquered and driven back. The Romans were not the first invaders of the country. The Britons themselves had come as invaders and they had been preceded by others, but until the coming of the Romans no written record of these influxes had been made. Gradually the invader occupied the greater part of the country, but soon he came up against the obstacle that had no doubt held up earlier invaders and was to hold up later ones -- the mountains of Wales and Scotland. Among the mountains the Britons took refuge and here the invader was forced to come to a stop.

During the next four hundred years, though England became a Roman colony, Wales and N. W. Scotland remained largely

unconquered. The Romans made their magnificent roads into Wales (Watling Street went from London to Anglesey), they built camps at Caernarvon (Segontium) and at Caerleon, and great walls to keep back the Scots. But outside the camps and beyond the Wall, the Roman influence was hardly felt, the old Celtic language was spoken and Latin never became a spoken language there as it did in England, at any rate in the larger towns.

In 410 A. D. the Romans left Britain; their soldiers were needed to defend Rome itself against the Goths. It was then that the Angles and Saxons and Jutes came and seized the undefended Britain. And they came to stay. Once more the Britons of England were driven to the mountains of Wales and Scotland, W. Ireland and the Isle of Man, to Cornwall or Brittany.

THE CELTIC ELEMENT

The language spoken by those Britons has developed into Welsh, spoken by the people of Wales; Gaelic, spoken in parts of the Highlands of Scotland; Erse, spoken in Ireland; and Breton, spoken in Brittany in France. There is still some Manx spoken in the Isle of Man, but it is dying out; and there used to be a Cornish

language, but this died out in the eighteenth century. Welsh and Erse, Gaelic, Breton and Manx, though they come from the same ancestor, are not of course the same language, but a Welshman would probably be understood (with difficulty) by a Breton, and a Manxman might make something of a speech in Gaelic or Erse. But if an Englishman heard a speech in any of these languages, he would not understand a single word of it. That is because the English that he speaks comes, not from the Britons who withstood the Romans, but from the Angles who made Britain 'Angle-land'; and English took practically nothing from the old Celtic language. The words *ass*, *brock* (= a badger), *bannock* (= a loaf of home-made bread) and *bin* (= a manger) are probably survivals of British words. And there have been importations into English at a later date; from Welsh: *druid*, *flannel*, *gull*, *bard*; from Scotch Gaelic: *cairn*; *clan*, *plaid*, *whisky*; and from Irish: *brogue*, *shamrock*, *galore*.

But something of Celtic has been fossilized in numerous place names. Ten of our rivers still have the beautiful name of *Avon*, from the Celtic word for 'river'; and *Esk*, *Ex*, *Usk*, *Ouse*, *Aire* are all from the word for 'water'. The *Don* and *Doune* (like the *Danube*) are from another old Celtic word for 'water'. *Stour*, *Tees*, *Trent*, *Wye* and *Wey* are all Celtic names. The Celtic *Dun*

(= a protected place) can be seen in *Dundee*; *Kill* (= a church) in *Kildare*, *Kilkenny*; *-combe* (= a hollow) in *Ilfracombe*, *Combe Martin*; *caer* (= a castle) in *Caerlon*, *Carlisle*, *Cardiff*; and *llan-* (= holy) in *Llangollen*, *Llandudno*. The names *London*, *Dover*, *York*, *Glasgow* are British, and so is the first part of *Dorchester*, *Gloucester*, *Manchester*, *Winchester*, *Salisbury*, to which has been added the old English *ceaster* (from the Latin *castra* = a camp) or *-burgh* (= a frot).

THE ANGLO-SAXON ELEMENT

The story of English in England, therefore, begins in the first half of the fifth century when the invaders came, the Angles from Schleswig, the Saxons from Holstein, and the Jutes from Jutland. The language they all spoke belonged to the Germanic speech family. This in turn was separated into three main families: EAST GERMANIC, which died out with Gothic about the eighth century; NORTH GERMANIC, which developed into Swedish, Norwegian, Danish and Icelandic; and WEST GERMANIC, from which are descended Dutch, Flemish, Friesian and English. But the Germanic languages are merely one branch of another great family, the Indo-European, which comprises most of the languages of Europe and India.

The parent Indo-European language began several thousands of years B. C., probably in South Europe near the Asian border. It spread West into Europe and East into India, splitting and modifying into various forms as it spread and came into contact with other languages of different origin. As a result of these divisions there are two main groups of languages in the Indo-European family: there is the Western group, containing Germanic, Celtic, Greek, Latin; and there is the Eastern group

containing Balto-Slavonic, Indo-Iranian, Albanian and Armenian. The chart on “INDO-EUROPEAN LANGUAGES” will show the modern descendants of Indo-European and their relationship to each other.

The language that these invaders of England spoke was a west Germanic member of the Indo-European languages. We generally term it ‘Anglo-Saxon’. The Jutes settled in Kent, Southern Hampshire and the Isle of Wight; the Saxons in the rest of Southern England south of the Thames; the Angles in the land north of the Thames. Each of the three tribes spoke a different form of their common language. And so in England (‘Britain’ had now become ‘Englaland’, the land of the Angles’) three different dialects developed -- or rather four dialects, for very soon two forms grew up in the North, one spoken north of the Humber (Northumbrian), the other south of the Humber (Mercian).

The dialect of the Saxons was called West Saxon, that of the Jutes was called Kentish. At first it was the Northumbrian with its center at York that developed the highest standard of culture. It was in Northumbria in the eighth century that Caedmon, the first great English poet, wrote his poetry, and it was into

Northumbrian that the Venerable Bede translated the gospel of St. John. Then for a time under Alfred the Great (848-901), who had his capital in Winchester and who encouraged learning in his kingdom and also was himself a great writer, West Saxon became pre-eminent. It remained pre-eminent until Edward the Confessor held his court not in Winchester but in Westminster. Then London became the capital of the country; and from Mercian, the dialect spoken in London -- and at Oxford and Cambridge -- came the Standard English that we speak today. But the language of England in the time of Alfred bears little resemblance to the language of today.

Anglo-Saxon or Old English was an inflected language, but not so highly inflected as Greek, Latin or Gothic. Thus there were five cases of nouns (Nominative, Vocative, Accusative, Genitive, Dative), 'strong' and 'weak' declensions for adjectives (each with five cases); there was a full conjugation of verbs -- complete with Subjunctive -- and there was a system of grammatical gender. So in Old English *hand* was feminine, *foet* (= foot) was masculine, but *heafod* (= head) was neuter; *wif* (=wife) was neuter, but *wifmann* (= woman) was masculine; *dag* (= day) was masculine but *niht* (= night) was feminine.

Most of that has changed. In modern English, grammatical gender of nouns has completely disappeared, adjectives no longer 'agree' with their nouns in number, case and gender, nouns have only two cases, verbs very few forms, and the subjunctive has practically disappeared. Most of these changes were caused, or at any rate hastened, by the two other invasions of England.

THE DANISH ELEMENT

The first of these was by the 'Northmen' or Danes. Towards the close of the eighth century they appeared, first as raiders, then as conquerors and settlers. For a time they were held at bay by Alfred and the country was divided, the northern half or 'Danelaw' being ruled by the Danes, the southern half by Alfred. But in 1016, after Alfred's death, a Danish King, Canute, became King of all England as well as of Denmark and Norway.

The language spoken by the Danes was not unlike the language of England. Words like *mother* and *father*, *man* and *wife*, *summer* and *winter*, *house*, *town*, *tree*, *land*, *grass*, *come*, *ride*, *see*, *think*, *will* and a host of others, were common to both languages, and Saxon and Dane could more or less understand each other. But though the languages were similar, the endings were different. And, as the roots of the words were the same in both languages, Saxon and Dane found they could understand each other better if the inflectional endings tended to be leveled to the same form and ultimately to be dropped altogether.

There were, too, some positive gains in vocabulary and grammar. The word *law* is Danish, so are *leg*, *skin*, *skull*, *knife*, *sky* and

Thursday. The Old English plural pronouns *hi, hiera, hem* were very like the singular forms *he, hiere, him*, so it was a great advantage when the Danish plural forms *they, their, them* ousted them.

Among adjectives from Danish there are *flat, happy, low, ugly, weak* and *wrong*; among verbs *want, call, cut, die, lift* and *take*. The Danish *are* replaced the Anglo-Saxon *sindon*, and *same* replaced *thilke*. And it is because of the Danes that today we say *eggs* instead of the Saxon *eyren* and speak of a window (old Norse *vindauga* = wind-eye) and not, as the Saxons did, of an *eye-thril* (= eye-hole), though we do say *nostril* ('nose-hole').

An interesting feature of the language is a number of Danish forms existing side by side with, and usually with a different meaning from, the English forms, e.g.

<u>English</u>	<u>Danish</u>	<u>English</u>	<u>Danish</u>
shirt	skirt	rear	raise
no	nay	from	fro
drop	drip	blossom	bloom
sit	seat		

THE NORMAN ELEMENT

There was still one other invasion which was to play a major part in the shaping of the English language, that of the Normans. We generally date the Norman-French period in English history from the invasion by William the Conqueror in 1066, but Norman influence had appeared before then. The Saxon King Ethelred the Unready (reigned 978-1016) had married a Norman princess, and his son Edward the Confessor (1042-1066), who reigned after him, had been brought up in France. This had the result that a number of French words had come into the language before William the Conqueror became King of England.

The Normans were descended from the same fierce warrior race of 'Norsemen' as had harried England a century before the coming of the Conqueror. In 912 Rollo the Rover was given Normandy by the French King Charles the Simple. With amazing vigor the Normans became one of the most highly organized states in the world. They adopted French as their language, embraced Christianity and became renowned for their learning, their military prowess and their organizing ability.

After defeating the English king, Harold, at Hastings in 1066, William the Conqueror began to organize England on the Norman pattern. Many Frenchmen came to England bringing the rich learning and developed civilization of Normandy, and putting England into the full stream of European culture and thought. The Normans ruled with a hard hand, and the defeated Saxons suffered oppression and indignities. For the next three centuries all the Kings of England spoke French; all the power in Court and castle and Church was in the hands of the Normans, and the Normans organized from above the lives and activities of the common people. The language they spoke was French and they never dreamed of doing their organizing in any language except French or Latin. For about three hundred years two languages were spoken side by side in England. The 'official' language was French; English was spoken only by the 'common' people. Robert of Gloucester, writing about 1300, says:

So, England came into Normandy's hand; and the Normans spoke French just as they did at home and had their children taught in the same manner so that people of rank in this country who came of their blood all stick to the same language; for if a man knows no French, people will think little of him. But the lower classes still stick to English as their own language. I

imagine there is no country in the world that doesn't keep its own language except England. But it is well known that it is the best thing to know both languages, for the more a man knows the more he is worth.

The language of Saxon times was being changed, but it was in no danger of dying out; and the changes were all to the good.

Ultimately Norman and Saxon united to form one nation, but it had taken more than three centuries. The turning point was perhaps marked in 1362 when for the first time Edward III opened Parliament in English. At the same time the Statute of Pleading enacted that proceedings in law courts should be in English because 'French has become much unknown in this realm'. In 1415 the English ambassadors who represented Henry V could not speak French, and the papers they had to sign were written in Latin. Henry himself said, according to Shakespeare, as he tried to woo Katherine: 'It is as easy for me, Kate, to conquer the Kingdom as to speak so much more French.'

When finally English emerged as the language of England, it had been greatly modified by the vicissitudes through which it had gone. The gradual dropping of inflectional endings and the

general grammatical simplification, which had begun in the time of the Danes, had gone on. These changes had been greatly accelerated by the collision with French and by the fact that English had for three centuries been almost entirely a spoken language, no longer restrained and kept from change by literary models.

The changes were striking and revolutionary. The language had now got rid of grammatical gender -- a feat that so far as we can tell no other language in the world has achieved. Case endings of nouns had been reduced to one, the Genitive or Possessive; prepositions had taken the place of inflectional endings. Plural forms, though not made entirely regular, had been made much fewer, verb forms had been simplified, and the whole language had been made much more flexible and expressive.

All this was more or less the accidental or indirect result of the Norman Conquest. What was its more direct effect? There is no doubt that its greatest impact was on the vocabulary. The language emerged with its essential structure still Germanic. But an examination of the vocabulary of modern English will show that approximately 50 per cent of the words in it are of French or Latin origin, and half of these were adopted between 1250 and

1400. Nevertheless, despite this tremendous French element, English remains fundamentally Anglo-Saxon, for though it is easy enough to make sentences on ordinary subjects without using a single word of French or Latin origin, it is practically impossible to make even a short sentence without using Saxon words.

The borrowings throw an interesting light on the social history of the times. C. L. Wrenn says, "In it (the English language) as it were, there lies fossilized or still showing the signs of the freshness of the assimilation, the whole of English history, external and internal, political and social."

If all other sources of knowledge about the Normans were lost, we could almost re-construct the times from an examination of the language of today. We should know, for example, that the Normans were the ruling race, for almost all the words expressing government (including *government* itself) are of French origin. It is true that the Normans left the Saxon words *king* and *queen*, *earl*, *lord* and *lady*; but *prince*, *sovereign*, *throne*, *crown*, *royal*, *state*, *country*, *people*, *nation*, *parliament*, *duke*, *count*, *chancellor*, *minister*, *council* and many other such words are all Norman. So too are such words as *honour*, *glory*,

courteous, duty, polite, conscience, noble, pity, fine, cruel, etc., words expressing the new ideas of chivalry and refinement (both, again, Norman words). From their activity in building (in the 'Norman style') and architecture came *arch, pillar, palace, castle, tower, etc.*; from their interest in warfare we got: *war, peace, battle, armour, officer, soldier, navy, captain, enemy, danger, march, company*, to mention but a few. The Normans were great law-givers, and though *law* itself is Scandinavian, the words *justice, judge, jury, court, cause, crime, traitor, assize, prison, tax, money, rent, property, injury* are all of French origin.

By the thirteenth century there was a certain amount of translation of the Scriptures and of sermons from Latin into English by Norman monks. In making these translations it was often easier to adopt the Latin word, generally in French guise than to hunt round for the Saxon equivalent. So a large number of French words connected with religion came into the language: *religion, service, saviour, prophet, saint, sacrifice, miracle, preach, pray*.

The names of nearly all articles of luxury and pleasure are Norman: the simpler things are English. There was the Norman *castle* and *city*; but *town* and *hamlet, home* and *house* are

English. The Norman had his *relations, ancestors* and *descendants*; but the English words are *father* and *mother, sister, brother, son* and *daughter*. The Norman had *pleasure, comfort, ease, delight*; the Englishman had *happiness* and *gladness* and *work*. The names of great things of Nature, if not of art, are English: the *sun, the moon, the stars, winds, morning* and *evening, the plough, the spade, wheat, oats, grass*; the Norman had *fruit* and *flowers, art, beauty, design, ornament*.

The lowly English worker was a *shoemaker, shepherd, miller, fisherman, smith* or *baker*; the men who came more in contact with the rulers were *tailors, barbers, painters, and carpenters*. The Normans used *chairs, tables* and *furniture*; the Englishman had only the humble *stool*. The Norman ate the big *dinner, feast, supper*, at which food could be *boiled, fried, roasted*; the Englishman had the simpler *breakfast*.

The whole situation is given in a very interesting passage in Scott's Ivanhoe, where Wamba points out to Gurth that the names of almost all the animals while they are alive are English, but when they are prepared for food they are Norman. In other words, the poor Saxon had all the work and trouble of looking after them while they were alive. But when there was the

pleasure of eating them, the Englishman's *cow*, *bull* or *ox* became French *beef*; his *sheep* and *lamb* became French *mutton*; his *swine* or *pig* became *pork* or *bacon*; his *calf* turned to *veal*, and the *deer* (which he would be hanged for killing) went to Norman tables as *venison*.

The close relationship both for peace and war that England and France have always had from Norman times until the present has resulted in a constant influx of French words into the language. In the thirteenth century the University of Paris, the most renowned of its time, attracted English scholars and incidentally led to the founding of Oxford. It is interesting to note that at that time the pronunciation of the French of Paris was different from Anglo-Norman French. ('Chaucer's Prioress, it will be remembered, spoke French after the scole of Stratford-atte-Bowe. For French of Paris was to hire unknowe'.) So we have occasionally two English words, both derived from the same French word, but borrowed at different times, and, as a result, having different pronunciations and usually slightly different meanings. They are known as 'doublets'. Examples are: *warden*, *guardian*, *warranty*, *guarantee*; *cattle*, *chattel*; *catch*, *chase*.

French words that came early into the language became fully anglicized both in accent and pronunciation. The later importations, say from the sixteenth century onwards, failed to achieve this complete incorporation into the language. A feature of Old English, and of the Germanic group generally, was that in words of more than one syllable the accent is on the first syllable. And we have that accentuation in early borrowings from French such as *virtue, nature, honour, favour, courage, reason, captain*. Words like *campaign, connoisseur, facade, menage* have not yet acquired this accentuation. Again, words like *table, chair, castle, grocer, beauty* are so completely 'English' that it gives us almost a shock of surprise to realize that they have not always been native words. But with *amateur, soufftet, valet, chef* we do not have that feeling.

The word *garage* is in a half-way stage. We are not quite sure whether it ought to be pronounced [gara:ʒ], [gəra:ʒ] or whether, like *carriage* or *marriage*, it has reached Anglicization as [garidʒ]. Compare again the words of early borrowing, *chief, chore, chapel, cherish, chimney, Charles* (where the 'ch' is pronounced [tʃ] with the later ones *chef, chaperon, champagne, chauffeur, chandelier, Charlotte*, where the 'ch' is [ʃ]). Similarly, the 'g' pronounced [dʒ] in *rage, siege, age, judge*, dates these as

old borrowings that have become anglicized, whereas the ‘g’ pronounced [ʒ], in *rouge, mirage, sabotage, camouflage* shows that these are more recent borrowings. Or compare the vowels in *suit* and *suite, vine* and *ravine; duty* and *debut; beauty* and *beau; count* and *tour*.

In almost every century since Norman times French words have entered the language. In the sixteenth we took, among many others: *pilot, rendez-vous, volley, vase, moustache, machine*. In the seventeenth we had: *reprimand, ballet, burlesque, champagne, naive, muslin, soup, group, quart*. In the eighteenth: *emigre, guillotine, corps, espionage, depot, bureau, canteen, rouge, rissole, brunette, picnic, police*. In the nineteenth: *barrage, chassis, parquet, baton, rosette, profile, suede, cretonne, restaurant, menu, chauffeur, fiancee, preslige, debacle*. And in the twentieth century we continued with *garage, camouflage, hangar, revue*.

An interesting effect of the French, particularly the Norman, element has been to give the language a sort of bilingual quality, with two words, one of Saxon origin and one of French origin, to express roughly the same meaning. Thus we have *foe* and *enemy, friendship* and *amity; freedom* and *liberty; unlikely* and

improbable; homely and domesticated; happiness and felicity; fatherly and paternal; motherhood and maternity; bold and courageous; love and charity, and a host of others. This duality has been turned to great use, for in practically no case are there any complete synonyms. Quite often there is a difference of meaning, almost always there is a difference of association or emotional atmosphere; and the Saxon word has generally the deeper emotional content; it is nearer the nation's heart. Brotherly love is deeper than fraternal affection; love is stronger than charity; help expresses deeper need than aid; a hearty welcome is warmer than a cordial reception.

There is just one other rather interesting characteristic of Old English that largely died out with the coming of the Normans: that is its power and ingenuity in making compounds from its native words. Thus Old English had such words (replaced by the French word in brackets) as: *fore-elders* (ancestors); *fair-hood* (beauty); *wanhope* (despair); *earth-tilth* (agriculture); *gold-hoard* (treasure); *book-hoard* (library); *star-craft* (astronomy); *learning-knight* (disciple); *leech-craft* (medicine); and the title of a moral treatise of about 1340 was *The Ayenbite of Inwit* (The 'again bite', i.e. 'remorse', of 'conscience').

Since Norman times no other invader has come to England to impose an alien tongue on the country. But the stream of words has never ceased to flow in.

THE CLASSICAL ELEMENT

Both Latin and, to a lesser degree, Greek have been important contributors, though often Latin, and even oftener Greek, words have come in French form or via French or some other language. Some Latin words were taken into the language of the Angles and Saxons before these peoples came to England, e.g. *wine, cup, butter, cheese, silk, copper, street, pound, mile, plum*. A few came in during the Roman occupation and were learned by the English from Romanized Britons of the towns, chiefly place names like *ceaster* (Latin, *castra*). With the coming of Christian culture from Rome and Ireland in the sixth and seventh centuries numerous others came: *candle, monk, bishop* (Latin *episcopus*), *Mass*. In all about 400 Latin words became English before the Norman Conquest, but many of these are not commonly used.

In the Middle English period a number of technical or scientific terms were taken and given a wider application, e.g. *index, simile, pauper, equivalent, legitimate, diocese, tolerance*.

A great flood came with the Revival of Learning in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. For a time 'the whole Latin vocabulary became potentially English'. The English 'Grammar Schools' were schools where Latin grammar, not English grammar, was taught. Nor was it only a written language. It became a medium of international communication between scholars, and in the schools the boys spoke Latin -- at least while their teacher was within earshot. Bacon and Newton wrote some of their books in Latin. Writers like Milton and Sir Thomas Browne wrote magnificent but highly Latinized English. Books to expound English grammar were written in Latin and the English language was distorted to fit into the pattern of Latin grammar. Not all the words that were adopted then have lasted, but many of them have, for example in the sixteenth century: *specimen, focus, arena album, minimum, lens, complex, pendulum*; in the eighteenth century: *nucleus, alibi, ultimatum, extra, insomnia, via, deficit*; in the nineteenth century: *ego, opus, referendum, bacillus*.

We have mentioned that many Latin words came through French. In the same way most Greek words came through Latin into French and English. Most of them were learned, technical or

scientific words. At the time of the Revival of Learning many of the new ideas or branches of learning that the Renaissance brought were expressed by Greek words: *arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, grammar, logic, rhetoric, poetry, comedy, dialogue, prologue.*

Of the more general terms that English had gained by the fifteenth century were: *Bible, academy, atom, tyrant, theatre.* In the sixteenth century came: *alphabet, drama, chorus, theory;* the seventeenth century contributed *orchestra, museum, hyphen, clinic.* Since then science, medicine, physics, chemistry and other sciences and arts have gone to Greek for their nomenclature, coining from Greek words that the Greeks never knew: *dynamo and psychology, zoology and telephone, photograph, bicycle, aeroplane, nitrogen cosmetic and antiseptic.*

In addition there are a great number of words formed from Greek prefixes tacked on to words of English or other languages, like anti (= against): anti-British, antipodes; hyper (= beyond): hypercritical, hyperbole; arch (= chief): archbishop; dia (= through): diameter, diagonal; hemi (= half): hemisphere; homo (= same): homogeneous; homonym; mono (= single): monoplane, monocle, monotonous; pan (= all): pantomime, pantheist; poly (= many):

polysyllable, polyglot; pro (= before): prophet, prologue; pseudo (= false): pseudonym; syn / sym (= with): sympathy, synthesis; tele (= at a distance): telegraph; tri (= three): tripod, tricycle. From suffixes, like -ism, we get Bolshevism, vegetarianism; from -ology, sociology, radiology and numerous others.

BORROWINGS FROM OTHER LANGUAGES

From almost every country in the world words have come into this language. Italy, for so long the centre of European culture, has given words to our vocabulary of music and architecture and poetry: piano, piccolo, soprano, finale, solo, sonata, opera; palette, cameo, fresco, miniature, studio, model, vista; balcony, corridor, parapet, stucco; sonnet, stanza, canto. But there have been more commonplace words, too, from Italy: alarm, brigand, florin, pilgrim (all before 1500), umbrella, influenza, muslin, duel, milliner and monkey.

From Spanish we have ‘cargo, cigar, cigarette, and cork’. English seamen clashed with Spanish ones in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and we see the evidence of this in ambushade, desperado, dispatch, grandee, and renegade. Alligator is really the Spanish el lagarto = ‘the lizard’. ‘Sherry’

gets its name from the Spanish port of Jerez. From the voyages of the Elizabethan seamen to the New World we have 'potato, tobacco, canoe and toboggan'. From Mexico came 'chocolate, cocoa (a mistake for cacao), tomato'. 'Cannibal' is said to have been brought to Europe by Columbus, and 'hammock, hurricane, maize' are Caribbean words.

Portugal gave us 'port' (wine) from Oporto, 'marmalade, tank, buffalo, verandah, parasol, caste and firm (a business Company)' and, from Portuguese exploration in Africa, 'banana, and negro'.

We are reminded of the fame of Holland as a maritime nation by 'yacht, buoy, freight, hull, dock, skipper, cruise and smuggle', and of the rich school of Dutch and Flemish painting by: 'landscape, easel, sketch'.

From India we have 'pyjamas, shampoo, bangle, chutney, khaki, teak, bungalow, curry, ginger and chintz'. From Persian we get 'bazaar, caravan, divan, jackal, jasmine, lilac and check- mate in chess (shah mat = the King is dead)'. From Arabic come 'admiral, alkali, lemon, alcohol, algebra, coffee, cotton, crimson and assassin'. 'Tea' is from the Chinese; 'bamboo, bantam, gong

and sago' from Malaya. From Polynesia and Australasia we have 'taboo, cockatoo, boomerang, kangaroo'.

No language seems to be so ready as English to absorb foreign words, perhaps because there has never been any self-conscious worship of 'pure English' that opposed the 'debasement' of the language by the introduction of new words. So when, for example, the potato was brought to Europe, the English used the Native American word; the French on the other hand gave it a French name, *pomme de terre*. Even though there is already a word in English similar in meaning to the foreign one, English still takes in the foreign word. Take for example the words 'preface, foreword, prologue' where French, Anglo-Saxon and Greek have contributed to expressing the same idea; or 'proverb, saying (or saw), aphorism, precept, motto' where, in addition, Latin and Italian have also been enrolled.

In the course of time each word acquires a slightly or even markedly different meaning from the others. Almost any group of synonyms in the language would illustrate this. But to take one at random, here are thirty-seven 'synonyms' for the general idea of 'thief': robber, burglar, house-breaker, pick-pocket, cut-purse, shop-lifter, pilferer, stealer, filcher, plunderer, pillager, despoiler,

highwayman, footpad, brigand, bandit, marauder, depredator, purloiner, peculator, swindler, embezzler, defrauder, gangster, pirate, buccaneer, sharper, harpy, cracksman, crook, poacher, kidnapper, abductor, plagiarist, rifter, thug, and welsher.

This borrowing has made English a rich language with a vocabulary of already about half a million words, and growing daily. It is this wealth of near-synonyms which gives to English its power to express exactly the most subtle shades of meaning.

CHAPTER TWO

EARLY MODERN ENGLISH

The late Middle Ages had seen the triumph of the English language in England, and the establishment once more of a standard form of literary English. This did not mean, however, that English was now entirely without a rival: Latin still had great prestige as the language of international learning, and it was a long time before English replaced it in all fields. Even the natural scientists, the proponents of the New Philosophy, often wrote in Latin. The philosopher of the new science, Francis Bacon, wrote his Advancement of Learning in English, but the book that he intended as his major contribution to scientific method, the Novum Organum, was in Latin. And the three greatest scientific works published by Englishmen between 1600 and 1700 were all in Latin Gilbert's book on magnetism (1600), Harvey's on the circulation of the blood (1628), and Newton's Principia (1689), which propounded the theory of gravitation and the laws of motion. However, by about 1700 Latin had fallen into disuse as the language of learning in England, and Newton's Opticks, published in 1704, was in English.

ENGLISH VERSUS LATIN

In the defeat of Latin and the final establishment of English as the sole literary medium in England, quite an important part was played by the religious disputes that raged from the fifteenth to the seventeenth century. At the time of the Reformation, controversialists wanted to be read by as large a public as possible. Since many of the people who were attracted by Protestantism were of humble origins, and lacked a classical education, this meant that controversial books and pamphlets tended to be written in English.

When Sir Thomas More wrote for the entertainment of the learned men of Europe, as in the Utopia, he wrote in Latin, but when he was drawn into the domestic religious controversy against the Reformers he wrote books and pamphlets in English. Milton, similarly, more than a century later, wrote defences of the English people and the English republic which were intended for the learned men of Europe, and these were in Latin. But the bulk of his controversial prose (on episcopacy, divorce, the freedom of the press, and so on) was intended to have an

immediate impact on English politics, and was written in English.

Another factor that worked in favor of English was the rise of social and occupational groups which had little or no Latin, but which nevertheless had something to say - which of course they said in English. Such were many of the practical men of sixteenth and seventeenth-century England - skilled craftsmen, instrument makers, explorers and navigators. A gentleman-scientist like Gilbert wrote in Latin, but there were plenty of Elizabethan treatises on practical subjects like navigational instruments, warfare, and so on, which were written in English for the plain man, and sometimes by him. Here, obviously, an important part was played by the invention of printing, and the spread of literacy which followed it.

A third factor in favor of English was the increase in national feeling which accompanied the rise of the modern nation-state in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The medieval feeling that a man was a part of Christendom was replaced by the modern feeling that a man is an Englishman or a Frenchman or an Italian. This change in feeling seems to be the result of changes in economic and political organization.

The medieval system of holding land from a lord by personal service, in which a man could be lord and vassal of different fiefs in several countries, and in which power was decentralized was replaced by a system in which a powerful, and centralized state apparatus attended to the interests of a national merchant class, in direct competition with the government and merchants of other countries. This increase in national feeling led to a greater interest and pride in the national language, while the language of international Christendom, Latin, slowly fell into the background. The new nationalism led to conscious attempts to create a vernacular literature to vie with that of Greece or Rome, and both Spenser's Faery Queen (1590) and Milton's Paradise Lost (1667) were attempts to do for English what Homer and Virgil had done for Greek and Latin.

But, while English was thus establishing its supremacy over Latin, it was at the same time more under the influence of Latin than at any other time in its history. The Renaissance was the period of the rediscovery of the classics in Europe. In England there was quite a revival of Greek scholarship, symbolic of which was the foundation of St Paul's School by Dean Colet in 1509. But always it was Latin that was of major importance, and we see

the constant influence of Latin literature, Latin rhetorical theories, the Latin language.

LOAN WORDS FROM LATIN

One result of this Latin influence on English during the Renaissance was the introduction of a large number of Latin words into the language. We have already seen that the influx of French words in the Middle English period had predisposed English speakers to borrow words from abroad. In the Renaissance, this predisposition was given full scope, and there was a flood of Latin words. The peak period was between about 1550 and 1650.

These were not, of course, the first Latin words to be borrowed by English. We have already seen how words like *street*, *mint*, and *wine* were borrowed while the English were still on the continent and words like *bishop* and *minister* during the Old English period. Quite a few Latin words were borrowed, too, during the Middle English period: they include religious terms, like *requiem* and *gloria*. Words from the law courts, like *client*, *executor*, *convict* and *memorandum*; medical and scientific words like *recipe*, *dissolve* *distillation*, *concrete*, *comet* and

equator; and numbers of abstract words, like adoption, conflict, dissent, imaginary, implication.

In early Modern English, however, the trickle of Latin loans becomes a river, and by 1600 it is a deluge. Some of the words were taken over bodily in their Latin form, with their Latin spelling, like *genius* (1513), *species* (1551), *cerebellum* (1565), *militia* (1590), *radius* (1597), *torpor* (1607), *specimen* (1610), *squalor* (1621), *apparatus* (1628), *focus* (1644), *tedium* (1662), *lens* (1693), and *antenna* (1698). Not, of course, that they were always taken over with their original meaning: *lens*, for example, is the Latin for 'lentil', and was applied to pieces of optical glass because a double-convex lens is shaped like a lentil seed.

Other words, however, were adapted; and given an English form. For example, the Latin ending *-atus* is sometimes replaced by *-ate*, as in *desperate* and *associate*. In other cases the Latin inflexion is left out, as in *complex* and *dividend* (Latin *complexus dividendum*). This reshaping is often influenced by the forms of French words derived from Latin; for example, the Latin ending *-tas* sometimes becomes English *-ty*, as in *celerity* (Latin *celeritas*), by analogy with similar words borrowed via

French. And in fact it is often difficult to be sure whether a word has come into English direct from Latin or via French.

These Latin loans tend to be learned words. Many of them are scientific terms, like pollen, vacuum, equilibrium, and momentum. Some are mathematical, like area, radius, series, and calculus. A number are legal terms, like alias, caveat, and affidavit. There are everyday words too, like album, miser, circus. But in general they are the kind of words that are introduced into a language through the medium of writing rather than in speech.

They did not enter the language without opposition, and there are numerous attacks in the sixteenth century on the, 'inkhorn terms', as they were called. For example, in Thomas Wilson's influential book The Art of Rhetoric (1553) there is a well-known attack on them. No doubt such attacks were to some extent provoked by the absurdities of a lunatic fringe, who were also ridiculed in the theatre. Such ridiculous affecters of Latinisms are, for example, Holofernes in Shakespeare's Love's Labour's Lost and Crispinus in Ben Jonson's Poetaster. But attacks and ridicule could not stop the tide of Latin loans, and the words held up to ridicule are often ones that have since become fully accepted and now seem quite

unexceptionable. For example, the ridiculous words used by Crispinus in Poetaster include nice specimens like rubrical, turgidous, oblatrant, and furibund; but they also include retrograde, reciprocal, defunct, spurious, and strenuous. Besides, there were plenty of people to defend Latinisms, and even Wilson admits that some of them are all right. And Shakespeare may make fun of Holofernes and his pedantry, but he himself is no purist, and is a great user of new words.

THE REMODELING OF WORDS

Not only did Latin influence bring in new words; it also caused existing words to be reshaped in accordance with their real or supposed Latin etymology. An example of this can be seen near the end of the passage from Wilson's Art of Rhetoric quoted above: the word 'coumpt'. This is simply a respelling of 'count', which was a Middle English loan from Anglo-Norman 'counter', descended from the Latin verb 'computare'. Wilson's spelling of the word has been influenced by the Latin, which he no doubt felt was the more 'correct' form.

Similarly, we owe the 'b' in our modern spelling of *debt* and *doubt* to Renaissance etymologizing, for the earlier spellings of

these were 'dette' and 'doute', which were their forms in Old French; the 'b' was inserted through the influence of Latin 'debitum' and 'dubitare'. In the case of 'debt' and 'doubt' the change was merely one of spelling, for the 'b' has never been pronounced in English; and the same is true of the 'p' inserted in receipt and the 'c' in 'indict'.

But there are cases where the actual pronunciation of a word was altered under Latin influence. Thus in Middle English we find the words 'descrive, parfit, assault, verdit, and aventure', which in the Renaissance were remodelled under Latin influence to 'describe, perfect, assault, verdict, and adventure'. An odd survival of Middle English 'aventure' is seen in the phrase 'to draw a bow at a venture' (from I Kings xxii. 34), where 'at a venture' is a misdivision of 'at aventure', meaning 'at random'.

Some of the Renaissance remodellings are based on false etymologies, so that they have the awkward disadvantage of combining pedantry with bad scholarship. Such is the case with 'advance and advantage', remodeled from Middle English 'avance and avantage'. The modern forms obviously arose from the belief that the initial a- represented the Latin prefix ad-, but in

fact both words derive from French *avant*, which comes from Latin *abante*.

A similar case is the word *admiral*, a reformation of earlier *amiral*. This word came into English from French, but the French had it from Arabic, where it occurred as the first two words of titles like *amir al bahr*, 'commander of the sea'. In this case, however, we cannot blame Renaissance pedantry alone for the *ad-*, for the form *admiral* is found in Middle English, and conversely *ammiral* is found in Milton. The change in this instance may have been encouraged by the resemblance to *admirable*.

LOAN WORDS FROM OTHER LANGUAGES

Although Latin was the main source of new words in the Renaissance, a number were borrowed from other languages too. Quite a few were from classical Greek, though in many cases these came via Latin or French. They tended to be learned words, and many of them are technical terms of literary criticism, rhetoric, or the natural sciences. Literary and rhetorical terms direct from Greek include pathos, phrase, and rhapsody; via Latin came many more, including irony, drama, rhythm, trochee, and climax; and there were a few via French, like ode, elegy, and scene. Scientific terms direct from Greek include larynx and cosmos, while via French came cube and acoustic, but the majority came via Latin, like anemone, caustic, cylinder, stigma, python, electric, and energy.

Quite a number of words were borrowed from Italian and Spanish. Part of a young gentleman's education was the grand tour of the continent, and France, Italy, and Spain were especially favored. In the sixteenth century there are frequent sarcastic references to the gallant who comes back from the continent affecting foreign clothes, customs, and morals, and larding his

speech with foreign words. Italy was particularly influential, and Italian has left its mark on our vocabulary.

When we think of Italian words in English, we no doubt think first of words connected with the arts, and especially with music. Most of these words are in fact later importations, mainly from the eighteenth century, but a few were borrowed in the Renaissance period: for example, madrigal and opera in music, sonnet in literature, fresco, cameo, and relief in the visual, arts, cornice and cupola in architecture. But in this early period there were other fields of activity where the Italians made an even greater impression. One was warfare, in which we have such Italian words as squadron, parapet, salvo, and bandit. Another was commerce, and here belong such Italian loans as traffic, contraband, argosy, and frigate.

Fewer words were borrowed from Spanish, but here again commerce and warfare are prominent: cask, cargo, anchovy, sherry, armada, galleon and parade. The Spaniards were famous for the formality of their manners, and there is a loan word that puts this in a nutshell: punctilio. Their lighter moments are reflected in guitar and spades (the suit in cards, meaning 'swords'). Since the early exploration of America was to a great

extent carried out by the Spaniards and the Portuguese, many early words for specifically American things came into English via Spanish or Portuguese. Thus from Spanish came mosquito, potato, and cannibal, which is a variant of caribal, meaning 'Carib, inhabitant of the Caribbean'. And from Portuguese we have flamingo, Molasses, and coconut.

The other fair-sized source of loan words in the Renaissance was Low German, in which we can lump together Dutch, Flemish, and the dialects of northern Germany. These regions had had close commercial contacts with England ever since the Norman Conquest, and many of the words borrowed by English have to do with seafaring and trade. From the Middle English period, for example, date 'luff, skipper, firkin, and deck.' Sixteenth-century loans include 'cambric, dock, splice, and yacht', while in the seventeenth century we find 'keelhaul, cruise, yawl, and smack'. The Dutch were also famous for painting (seventeenth-century easel, sketch, stipple) and for drinking (Middle English booze, seventeenth-century brandy).

CHAPTER THREE

THE RENAISSANCE PERIOD

Changing Conditions in the Modern Period

In the development of languages particular events often have recognizable and at times far-reaching effects. The Norman Conquest and the Black Death are typical instances that we have already seen. But there are also more general conditions that come into being and are no less influential. In the Modern English period, the beginning of which is conveniently placed at 1500, certain of these new conditions come into play, conditions that previously either had not existed at all or were present in only a limited way, and they cause English to develop along somewhat different lines from those that had characterized its history in the Middle Ages. The new factors were the printing press, the rapid spread of popular education, the increased communication and means of communication, the growth of specialized knowledge, and the emergence of various forms of self-consciousness about language.

The invention of the process of printing from movable type, which occurred in Germany about the middle of the fifteenth

century, was destined to exercise a far-reaching influence on all the vernacular languages of Europe. Introduced into England about 1476 by William Caxton, who had learned the art on the continent, printing made such rapid progress that a scant century later it was observed that manuscript books were seldom to be seen and almost never used. Some idea of the rapidity with which the new process swept forward may be had from the fact that in Europe the number of books printed before the year 1500 reaches the surprising figure of 35,000. The majority of these, it is true, were in Latin, whereas it is in the modern languages that the effect of the printing press was chiefly to be felt. But in England over 20,000 titles in English had appeared by 1640, ranging all the way from mere pamphlets to massive folios. The result was to bring books, which had formerly been the expensive luxury of the few, within the reach of many. More important, however, was the fact, so obvious today, that it was possible to reproduce a book in a thousand copies or a hundred thousand, every one exactly like the other. A powerful force thus existed for promoting a standard, uniform language, and the means were now available for spreading that language throughout the territory in which it was understood.

Such a widespread influence would not have been possible were it not for the fact that education was making rapid progress among the people and literacy was becoming much more common. In the later Middle Ages a surprising number of people of the middle class could read and write, as the Paston Letters abundantly show. In Shakespeare's London, though we have no accurate means of measurement, it is probable that not less than a third and probably as many as half of the people could at least read. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries there arose a prosperous trades class with the means to obtain an education and the leisure to enjoy it, attested to, for example, by the great increase in the number of schools, the tremendous journalistic output of a man like Defoe, and the rapid rise of the novel. Nowadays, when practically everyone goes to school, we witness the phenomenon of newspapers with circulations of several hundred thousand copies daily, even up to 2 million, and magazines that in an exceptional case reach a total of 80 million copies per month. As a result of popular education the printing press has been able to exert its influence upon language as upon thought.

A third factor of great importance to language in modern times is the way in which the different parts of the world have been

brought together through commerce, transportation, and the rapid means of communication we have developed. The exchange of commodities and the exchange of ideas are both stimulating to language. We shall see later how the expansion of the British Empire and the extension of trade enlarged the English vocabulary by words drawn from every part of the world, besides spreading the language over vast areas whose existence was undreamed of in the Middle Ages. But while diversification has been one of the results of transportation, unification has also resulted from ease of travel and communication. The steamship and the railroad, the automobile, and the airplane have brought people into contact with one another and joined communities hitherto isolated, while the post office and the telegraph, the telephone, the radio, the movies, television, and electronic data transmission have been influential in the intermingling of language and the lessening of the more easily altered local idiosyncrasies.

The fourth factor, the growth of specialized knowledge, has been important not only because new knowledge often requires new vocabulary but also because, in the early centuries of the modern period, Latin became less and less the vehicle for learned discourse. Both trends accelerated strongly during the

seventeenth century. The rapid accumulation of new knowledge was matched by a rapid trend away from publishing specialized and learned works in Latin.

Finally, there is the factor which we have referred to as self-consciousness about language. This has two aspects, one individual and one public. At the individual level we may observe a phenomenon that has become intensely important in modern times: as people lift themselves into a different economic or intellectual or social level, they are likely to make an effort to adopt the standards of grammar and pronunciation of the people with whom they have identified, just as they try to conform to fashions and tastes in dress and amusements. However superficial such conformity might be, people are as careful of their speech as of their manners. Awareness that there are standards of language is a part of their social consciousness. Most people are less aware that such standards are largely accidental rather than absolute, having developed through the historical contingencies of economics, culture, and class. At the public level a similar self-consciousness has driven issues of language policy over the past four centuries, long before “language policy” acquired its modern meaning. The beginnings of this public discussion are evident in the sixteenth-century

defense of English and debates about orthography and the enrichment of the vocabulary. Anxiety about language policy reached a new urgency in the second half of the seventeenth century. From that time, through eighteenth-century proposals for an academy to twentieth-century efforts at language planning in former colonies of European powers, a self-consciousness about the shape that English ought to take has been an endless source of concern. This concern has been no less passionate for often being fueled by naive beliefs about the nature of language and the determinants of linguistic change.

Effect upon Grammar and Vocabulary

The forces here mentioned may be described as both radical and conservative—radical in matters of vocabulary, conservative in matters of grammar. By a radical force is meant anything that promotes change in language; by conservative, what tends to preserve the existing status. Now it is obvious that the printing press, the reading habit, the advances of learning and science, and all forms of communication are favorable to the spread of ideas and stimulating to the growth of the vocabulary, while these same agencies, together with social consciousness as we have described it, work actively toward the promotion and

maintenance of a standard, especially in grammar and usage. They operate both singly and in combination. Education, for example, exerts its influence not only through formal instruction in language—grammar, spelling, pronunciation, etc.—but also by making possible something more important, the unconscious absorption of a more or less standard English through books, magazines, and newspapers. We shall accordingly be prepared to find that in modern times changes in grammar have been relatively slight and changes in vocabulary extensive. This is just the reverse of what was true in the Middle English period. Then the changes in grammar were revolutionary, but, apart from the special effects of the Norman Conquest, those in vocabulary were not so great.

The Problems of the Vernaculars

In the Middle Ages the development of English took place under conditions that, because of the Norman Conquest, were largely peculiar to England. None of the other modern languages of Europe had had to endure the consequences of a foreign conquest that temporarily imposed an outside tongue upon the dominant social class and left the native speech chiefly in the hands of the lower social classes. But by the close of the Middle English

period English had passed through this experience and, though bearing deep and abiding marks of what it had gone through, had made a remarkable recovery. From this time on the course of its history runs in many ways parallel with that of the other important European languages.

In the sixteenth century the modern languages faced three great problems: (1) recognition in the fields where Latin had for centuries been supreme, (2) the establishment of a more uniform orthography, and (3) the enrichment of the vocabulary so that it would be adequate to meet the demands that would be made upon it in its wider use. Each of these problems received extensive consideration in the England of the Renaissance, but it is interesting to note that they were likewise being discussed in much the same way in France and Italy, and to some extent in Germany and Spain. Italy had the additional task of deciding upon the basis of its literary dialect, a matter that in France and England had been largely taken care of by the ascendancy of Paris and London.

The Struggle for Recognition

Although English, along with the other vernaculars, had attained an established position as the language of popular literature, a strong tradition still sanctioned the use of Latin in all the fields of knowledge. This tradition was strengthened by the “revival of learning,” in which the records of Greek civilization became once more available in the original. Latin and Greek were not only the key to the world’s knowledge but also the languages in which much highly esteemed poetry, oratory, and philosophy were to be read. And Latin, at least, had the advantage of universal currency, so that the educated all over Europe could freely communicate with each other, both in speech and writing, in a common idiom. Beside the classical languages, which seemingly had attained perfection, the vulgar tongues seemed immature, unpolished, and limited in resource. It was felt that they could not express the abstract ideas and the range of thought embodied in the ancient languages. Scholars alone had access to this treasure; they could cultivate the things of the spirit and enrich their lives. It would seem at times as though they felt their superiority to the less educated and were jealous of a prerogative that belonged to them alone. The defenders of the classical tradition were at no loss for arguments in support of their position. It was feared that the

study of the classical languages, and even learning itself, would suffer if the use of the vernaculars were carried too far. And there were many who felt that it would be dangerous if matters like the disputes of theology and discussions in medicine fell into the hands of the indiscreet.

Against this tradition the modern languages now had their champions. In England there were many defenders of English against those who wished to discriminate against it, among them influential names like Elyot and Ascham, Wilson, Puttenham, and Mulcaster. Of those champions none was more enthusiastic than Richard Mulcaster. He expresses his opinion many times, but perhaps nowhere more eloquently than in the words: "For is it not in dede a mervellous bondage, to becom servants to one tung for learning sake, the most of our time, with losse of most time, whereas we maie have the verie same treasur in our own tung, with the gain of most time? our own bearing the joyfull title of our libertie and fredom, the Latin tung remembring us of our thraldom and bondage? I love Rome, but London better, I favor Italie, but England more, I honor the Latin, but I worship the English."

Influential as utterances such as these were, their importance lies in the fact that they voiced a widespread feeling. The real force behind the use of English was a popular demand, the demand of all sorts of men in practical life to share in the fruits of the Renaissance. The Revival of Learning had revealed how rich was the store of knowledge and experience preserved from the civilizations of Greece and Rome. The ancients not only had lived but had thought about life and drawn practical conclusions from experience. Much was to be learned from their discussion of conduct and ethics, their ideas of government and the state, their political precepts, their theories of education, their knowledge of military science, and the like. The Renaissance would have had but a limited effect if these ideas had remained the property solely of academicians. If the diplomat, the courtier, and the man of affairs were to profit by them, they had to be expressed in the language that everybody read.

The demand was soon met. Translations (and, it might be added, original works generated by the same intellectual ferment) virtually poured from the press in the course of the sixteenth century. The historians were great favorites, probably because their works, as so often described on the title pages, were “very delectable and profitable to read.” Thucydides and Xenophon had

been Englished before Shakespeare started school, and Herodotus appeared before the dramatist had begun his career. Caesar was translated by Arthur Golding in 1565, Livy and Sallust and Tacitus before the close of the century, and one of the great translations of the age, Plutarch's Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romans, in the version of Sir Thomas North, was published in 1579. Works dealing with politics and morals were equally popular. The Doctrinal of Princes, made by the noble orator Isocrates was translated from the Greek as early as 1534 by Sir Thomas Elyot, who had already given the English a taste of Plato in *The Knowledge Which Maketh a Wise Man*. Aristotle, Cicero, Seneca, Epictetus, and Marcus Aurelius appeared in whole or in part, while the poets and dramatists included Virgil, Ovid (1567), Horace (1566–1567), Terence, Theocritus, and most of the lesser names. Various partial translations of Homer were printed before Chapman's version began to appear in 1598. The translators did not stop with the great works of antiquity but drew also upon medieval and contemporary sources. Saint Augustine, Boethius, Peter Martyr, Erasmus, Calvin, and Martin Luther were among those rendered into English. It would seem that while scholars were debating the merits of Latin and English, the issue was being decided by the translators.

Other factors, however, contributed to the victory. One was the overzeal of the humanists themselves. Not content with the vigorous and independent Latin that was written in the Middle Ages, they attempted to reform Latin prose on the style and vocabulary of Cicero. Ciceronianism substituted slavish imitation for what had been a natural and spontaneous form of expression. Not only was the vocabulary of Cicero inadequate for the conveyance of modern ideas, but there was no hope of being able to surpass one's model. As Ascham confessed in his *Toxophilus*, "as for ye Latin or greke tonge, every thyng is so excellently done in them, that none can do better." Another factor was the Protestant Reformation, itself a phase of the Renaissance. From the time that Wycliffe refused to carry on his quarrel with the church in the language of the schools and took his cause directly to the people in their own tongue, one of the strongholds of Latin was lost. The amount of theological writing in English is almost unbelievable, for as one Elizabethan remarked, "The dissension in divinity is fierce beyond God's forbid." Finally, we must not overlook the fact that the contest between Latin and English had a commercial side. The market for English books was naturally greater than for Latin, and we cannot blame the Elizabethan printer if he sometimes thought, as one said to Thomas Drant in

1567, “Though, sir, your book be wise and full of learning, yet peradventure it will not be so saleable.”

Although it is plain to us nowadays that from the beginning the recognition of English was assured, the victory was not lightly won. The use of English for purposes of scholarship was frankly experimental. Sir Thomas Elyot in his *Doctrinal of Princes* (1534) says: “This little book...I have translated out of greke ...to the intent onely that I wolde assaie, if our English tongue mought receive the quicke and proper sentences pronounced by the greekes.” The statement is slightly apologetic. Certainly those who used English where they might have been expected to write in Latin often seem to anticipate possible criticism, and they attempt to justify their action. Ascham prefaces his *Toxophilus* with the statement: “And althoughe to have written this boke either in latin or Greke... had bene more easier and fit for mi trade in study, yet neverthelesse, I supposing it no point of honestie, that mi commodite should stop and hinder ani parte either of the pleasure or profite of manie, have written this Englishe matter in the Englishe tongue, for Englishe men.” In his *Castle of Health* (1534) Elyot is somewhat bolder in his attitude: “If physicians be angry, that I have written physicke in englishe, let them remember that the grekes wrate in greke, the Romains in

latine, Avicenna, and the other in Arabike, whiche were their own proper and maternall tongues. And if thei had bene as muche attached with envie and covetise, as some nowe seeme to be, they wolde have devised some particular language, with a strange cipher or forme of letters, wherin they wold have written their scyence, whiche language or letters no manne should have knowen that had not professed and practised physicke.” All these attempts at selfjustification had as their strongest motive the desire to reach the whole people in the language they understood best. This is stated with engaging frankness by Mulcaster: “I do write in my naturall English tounge, bycause though I make the learned my judges, which understand Latin, yet I meane good to the unlearned, which understand but English, and he that understands Latin very well, can understand English farre better, if he will confesse the trueth, though he thinks he have the habite and can Latin it exceeding well.” Statements such as these, which could be multiplied many times from the literature of the period, show that the recognition of English was achieved in spite of a rather persistent opposition.

As we approach the end of the century and see that English has slowly won recognition as a language of serious thought, we

detect a note of patriotic feeling in the attitude of many people. They seem to have grown tired of being told that English was crude and barbarous. This is apparent in the outburst of George Pettie in his book on *Civile Conversation* (1586): “There are some others yet who wyll set lyght by my labours, because I write in Englysh: and...the woorst is, they thinke that impossible to be doone in our Tongue: for they count it barren, they count it barbarous, they count it unworthy to be accounted of.” “But,” he adds, “how hardly soever you deale with your tongue, how barbarous soever you count it, how litle soever you esteeme it, I durst my selfe undertake (if I were furnished with Learning otherwyse) to wryte in it as copiously for varietie, as compendiously for brevitie, as choycely for woordes, as pithily for sentences, as pleasauntly for figures, and every way as eloquently, as any writer should do in any vulgar tongue whatsoever.” Mulcaster goes so far as to say: “I take this present period of our English tung to be the verie height therof, bycause I find it so excellentlie well fined, both for the bodie of the tung it self, and for the customarie writing thereof, as either foren workmanship can give it glosse, or as homewrought hanling can give it grace. When the age of our peple, which now use the tung so well, is dead and departed there will another succede, and with the peple the tung will alter and change. Which change in the full

harvest thereof maie prove comparable to this, but sure for this which we now use, it semeth even now to be at the best for substance, and the bravest for circumstance, and whatsoever shall becom of the English state, the English tung cannot prove fairer, then it is at this daie, if it maie please our learned sort to esteme so of it, and to bestow their travell upon such a subject, so capable of ornament, so proper to themselves, and the more to be honored, bycause it is their own.” In 1595 Richard Carew wrote a discourse on *The Excellency of the English Tongue*, and about 1583 Sir Philip Sidney could say, “But for the uttering sweetly and properly the conceit of the minde, which is the end of speech, that [English] hath it equally with any other tongue in the world.”

The Problem of Orthography

Spelling is for most people a pedestrian subject, but for the English, as for the French and the Italians, in the sixteenth century the question of orthography or “right writing,” as Mulcaster preferred to call it, was a matter of real importance and the subject of much discussion. The trouble was not merely that English spelling was bad, for it is still bad today, but that there was no generally accepted system that everyone could conform to. In short, it was neither phonetic nor fixed. Speaking generally,

the spelling of the modern languages in the Middle Ages had attempted with fair success to represent the pronunciation of words, and this is true of English in spite of the fact that Norman scribes introduced considerable confusion when they tried to write a language that they imperfectly knew and carried over habits that they had formed in writing French. The confusion was increased when certain spellings gradually became conventional while the pronunciation slowly changed. In some cases a further discrepancy between sound and symbol arose when letters were inserted in words where they were not pronounced (like the b in debt or doubt) because the corresponding word in Latin was so spelled (debitum, dubitare), or in other cases (for example, the gh in delight, tight) by analogy with words similarly pronounced (light, night) where the gh had formerly represented an actual sound. The variability of English spelling was an important part of the instability that people felt characterized the English language in the sixteenth century, especially as compared with a language like Latin. To many it seemed that English spelling was chaotic.

That the problem of bringing about greater agreement in the writing of English was recognized in the sixteenth century is apparent from the attempts made to draw up rules and to devise

new systems. The earliest of these, *An A.B.C. for Children* (before 1558), is almost negligible. It consists of only a few pages, and part of the space is devoted to “precepts of good lyvyng,” but the author manages to formulate certain general rules such as the use of the final *e* to indicate vowel length (*made, ride, hope*).

During the first half of the next century the tendency toward uniformity increased steadily. The fixation of English spelling is associated in most people’s minds with the name of Dr. Johnson, and a statement in the preface of his dictionary, published in 1755, might lend color to this idea. In reality, however, our spelling in its modern form had been practically established by about 1650. In *The New World of English Words* published in 1658 by Milton’s nephew Edward Phillips, the compiler says: “As for orthography, it will not be requisite to say any more of it then may conduce to the readers direction in the finding out of words,” and he adds two or three remarks about Latin *prae* being rendered in English by *pre-*, and the like. Otherwise he seemed to think that the subject did not call for any discussion. And in reality it did not. The only changes we should make in the sentence just quoted are in the spelling *then* (*for than*) and the

addition of an apostrophe in readers. A closer scrutiny of the preface as a whole would reveal a few other differences such as an occasional e where we have dropped it (kinde), ll and sse at the end of words (gratefull, harshnesse), -ick for -ic (logick), and a contracted form of the past participle (authoriz'd, chanc't). Even these differences are not very noticeable. Spelling was one of the problems that the English language began consciously to face in the sixteenth century. During the period from 1500 to 1650 it was fairly settled.

The Problem of Enrichment

English was undoubtedly inadequate, as compared with the classical languages, to express the thought that those languages embodied and that in England was now becoming part of a rapidly expanding civilization. The translations that appeared in such numbers convinced people of the truth of this fact. The very act of translation brings home to the translators the limitations of their medium and tempts them to borrow from other languages the terms whose lack they feel in their own. For writers to whom Latin was almost a second mother tongue the temptation to transfer and naturalize in English important Latin radicals was particularly great. This was so, too, with French and Italian. In

this way many foreign words were introduced into English. One may say that the same impulse that led scholars to furnish the English mind with the great works of classical and other literatures led them to enrich the English language with words drawn from the same source. New words were particularly needed in various technical fields, where English was notably weak. The author of a Discourse of Warre justifies his introduction of numerous military terms by an argument that was unanswerable: "I knowe no other names than are given by strangers, because there are fewe or none at all in our language."

It is not always easy, however, to draw the line between a word that is needed because no equivalent term exists, and one that merely expresses more fully an idea that could be conveyed in some fashion with existing words. We can appreciate the feeling of scholars for whom a familiar Latin word had a wealth of associations and a rich connotation; we must admit the reasonableness of their desire to carry such a word over into their English writing. English acquired in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries thousands of new and strange words.

The greater number of these new words were borrowed from Latin. But they were not exclusively drawn from that source.

Some were taken from Greek, a great many from French, and not a few from Italian and Spanish.

Permanent Additions

From the exaggeration of a critic like Wilson one might get the impression that much of the effort to introduce new words into the language was pedantic and ill-advised. Some of the words Wilson ridicules seem forced and in individual cases were certainly unnecessary. But it would be a mistake to conclude that all or even a large part of the additions were of this sort. Indeed the surprising thing about the movement here described is the number of words that we owe to this period and that seem now to be indispensable. Many of them are in such common use today that it is hard for us to realize that to the Elizabethan they were so strange and difficult as to be a subject of controversy. When Elyot wished to describe a democracy he said, "This manner of governaunce was called in Greke democratia, in Latine popularis potentia, in Englisshe the rule of the comminaltie." If he were not to have to refer to "the rule of the commonalty" by this roundabout phrase, he could hardly do better than to try to naturalize the Greek word. Again he felt the need of a single word for "all maner of lerning, which of some is called the world

of science, of other the circle of doctrine, which is in one word of Greke, encyclopedia” Though purists might object, the word encyclopedia filled a need in English, and it has lived on. The words that were introduced at this time were often basic words—nouns, adjectives, verbs. Among nouns we may note as random examples *allurement, allusion, anachronism, atmosphere, autograph, capsule, denunciation, dexterity, disability, disrespect, emanation, excrescence, excursion, expectation, halo, inclemency, jurisprudence*. Among adjectives we find *abject* (in our sense of “down in spirit”), *agile, appropriate, conspicuous, dexterous, expensive, external, habitual, hereditary, impersonal, insane, jocular, malignant*. Few of these could we dispense with. But it is among the verbs, perhaps, that we find our most important acquisitions, words like *adapt, alienate, assassinate, benefit* (first used by Cheke, who thought “our language should be writ pure”!), *consolidate, disregard* (introduced by Milton), *emancipate, eradicate, erupt, excavate, exert, exhilarate, exist, extinguish, harass, meditate* (which Sidney apparently introduced). It is hard to exaggerate the importance of a movement that enriched the language with words such as these.

Adaptation

Some words, in entering the language, retained their original form; others underwent change. Words like *climax*, *appendix*, *epitome*, *exterior*, *delirium*, and *axis* still have their Latin form. The adaptation of others to English was effected by the simple process of cutting off the Latin ending. *Conjectural* (L. *conjectural-is*), *consult* (L. *consult-are*) exclusion (L. *exclusion-em*), and *exotic* (L. *exotic-us*) show how easily in many cases this could be done. But more often a further change was necessary to bring the word into accord with the usual English forms. Thus, the Latin ending *-us* in adjectives was changed to *-ous* (*conspicu-us* > *conspicuous*) or was replaced by *-al* as in *external* (L. *externus*). Latin nouns ending in *-tas* were changed in English to *-ty* (*brevity* < *brevitas*) because English had so many words of this kind borrowed from French where the Latin *-tatem* regularly became *-té*. For the same reason nouns ending in *-antia*, *-entia* appear in English with the ending *-ance*, *-ence* or *-ancy*, *-ency*, while adjectives ending in *-bilis* take the usual English (or French) ending *-ble*. Examples are *consonance*, *concurrence*, *constancy*, *frequency*, *considerable*, *susceptible*. Many English verbs borrowed from Latin at this time end in *-ate* (*create*, *consolidate*, *eradicate*). These verbs were formed on the

basis of the Latin past participle (e.g., exterminatus, whereas the French exterminer represents the Latin infinitive exterminare). The English practice arose from the fact that the Latin past participle was often equivalent to an adjective, and it was a common thing in English to make verbs out of adjectives (busy, dry, darken).

Reinforcement through French

It is not always possible to say whether a word borrowed at this time was taken over directly from Latin or indirectly through French, for the same wholesale enrichment was going on in French simultaneously and the same words were being introduced in both languages. Often the two streams of influence must have merged. But that English borrowed many words from Latin firsthand is indicated in a number of ways. The word fact represents the Latin factum and not the French *fait*, which was taken into English earlier as feat. Many verbs like confiscate, congratulate, and exonerate are formed from the Latin participle (confiscat-us, etc.) and not from the French confisquer, congratuler, exonerer, which are derived from the infinitives confiscare, etc. Caxton has the form confisk, which is from French, but the word did not survive in this shape. The form

prejudicate is from Latin while prejudice represents the French *prejuger*. In the same way *instruct* and *subtract* show their Latin ancestry (*instructus*, *subtractus*) since the French *instruire* and *subtraire* would have become in English *instroy* (like *destroy*) and *subtray* (which is found in the fifteenth century). Our word *conjugation* is probably a direct importation from Latin (*conjugation-em*) since the more usual form in French was *conjugaison*. Sometimes the occurrence of a word in English earlier than in French (e.g., *obtuse*) points to the direct adoption from Latin, as do words like *confidence*, *confident*, which are expressed in French by the forms *confiance*, *confiant*, but which in English are used in senses that the French forms do not have.

There still remain, however, a good many words that might equally well have come into English from Latin or French. Verbs like *consist* and *explore* could come either from the Latin *consistere* and *explorare* or the French *consister* and *explorer*. *Conformation*, *conflagration*, and many other similar nouns may represent either Latin *conformation-em*, *conflagration-em*, or French *conformation*, *conflagration*. It is so with words like *fidelity*, *ingenuity*, *proclivity*, where the Latin *fidelitat-em* developed into French *fidélité*, but English possessed so many words of this kind from French that it could easily have formed others on the same pattern. So adjectives like *affable*, *audible*,

jovial may represent the Latin *affabilis* or the French *affable*, etc., and others like *consequent*, *modest*, *sublime* can have come equally well from the Latin or the French forms. It is really not important which language was the direct source of the English words because in either case they are ultimately of Latin origin. In many cases French may have offered a precedent for introducing the Latin words into English and may have assisted in their general adoption.

Words from the Romance Languages

Sixteenth-century purists objected to three classes of strange words, which they characterized as *inkhorn terms*, *oversea language*, and *Chaucerisms*. For the foreign borrowings in this period were by no means confined to learned words taken from Latin and Greek. The English vocabulary at this time shows words adopted from more than fifty languages, the most important of which (besides Latin and Greek) were French, Italian, and Spanish. English travel in France and consumption of French books are reflected in such words as *alloy*, *ambuscade*, *baluster*, *bigot*, *bizarre*, *bombast*, *chocolate*, *comrade*, *detail*, *duel*, *entrance*, *equip*, *equipage*, *essay*, *explore*, *genteel*, *mustache*, *naturalize*, *probability*, *progress*, *retrenchment*, *shock*,

surpass, talisman, ticket, tomato, vogue, and volunteer. But the English also traveled frequently in Italy, observed Italian architecture, and brought back not only Italian manners and styles of dress but also Italian words. Protests against the Italianate Englishman are frequent in Elizabethan literature, and the objection is not only that the Englishmen came back corrupted in morals and affecting outlandish fashions, but that they “powdered their talk with oversea language.” Nevertheless, Italian words, like Italian fashions, were frequently adopted in England. Words like *algebra, argosy, balcony, cameo, capriccio* (the common form of *caprice* until after the Restoration), *cupola, design, granite, grotto, piazza, portico, stanza, stucco, trill, violin, volcano* began to be heard on the lips of Englishmen or to be found in English books. Many other Italian words were introduced through French or adapted to French forms, words like *battalion, bankrupt, bastion, brigade, brusque, carat, cavalcade, charlatan, frigate, gala, gazette, grotesque, infantry, parakeet, and rebuff.* Many of these preserved for a time their Italian form. From Spanish and Portuguese, English adopted *alligator (el lagarto, the lizard), anchovy, apricot, armada, armadillo, banana, barricade* (often *barricado*, as in Shakespeare), *bastiment, bastinado, bilbo, bravado, brocade* (often employed in the form *brocado*), *cannibal, canoe, cedilla,*

cocoa, corral, desperado, embargo, hammock, hurricane, maize, mosquito, mulatto, negro, peccadillo, potato, renegado (the original form of *renegade*), *rusk, sarsaparilla, sombrero, tobacco, and yam*. Many of these words reflect the Spanish enterprise on the sea and colonization of the American continent. Like Italian words, Spanish words sometimes entered English through French or took a French form. Grenade, palisade, escalade, and cavalier are examples, although commonly found in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in the form *grenado, palisado, escalado, and cavaliero*, even when the correct Spanish form would have been *granada, palisada, escalada, and caballero*. Sometimes the influence of all these languages combined to give us our English word, as in the case of *galleon, gallery, pistol, cochineal*. Thus the cosmopolitan tendency, the spirit of exploration and adventure, and the interest in the New World that was being opened up show themselves in an interesting way in the growth of our vocabulary and contributed along with the more intellectual forms of activity to the enrichment of the English language.

The Movement Illustrated in Shakespeare

It is a well-known fact that, except for a man like the Elizabethan translator Philemon Holland, Shakespeare had the largest vocabulary of any English writer. This is due not only to his daring and resourceful use of words but also in part to his ready acceptance of new words of every kind. It is true that he could make sport of the inkhorn terms of a pedant like Holofernes, who quotes Latin, affects words like intimation, insinuation, explication, and replication, and has a high scorn for anyone like the slow-witted Dull who, as another character remarks, “hath not eat paper.” Shakespeare had not read Wilson in vain (see p. 218). But he was also not greatly impressed by Wilson’s extreme views. Among Shakespearian words are found *agile*, *allurement*, *antipathy*, *catastrophe*, *consonancy*, *critical*, *demonstrate*, *dire*, *discountenance*, *emphasis*, *emulate*, *expostulation*, *extract*, *hereditary*, *horrid*, *impertinency*, *meditate*, *modest*, *pathetical*, *prodigious*, *vast*, *the Romance words ambuscado*, *armada*, *barricade*, *bastinado*, *cavalier*, *mutiny*, *palisado*, *pell-mell*, *renegade* — all new to English in the latter half of the sixteenth century. Some of the words Shakespeare uses must have been very new indeed, because the earliest instance in which we find them at all is only a year or two before he uses them (e.g., *exist*,

initiate, jovial), and in a number of cases his is the earliest occurrence of the word in English (*accommodation, apostrophe, assassination, dexterously, dislocate, frugal, indistinguishable, misanthrope, obscene, pedant, premeditated, reliance, submerged*, etc.). He would no doubt have been classed among the liberals in his attitude toward foreign borrowing. Shakespeare's use of the new words illustrates an important point in connection with them. This is the fact that they were often used, upon their first introduction, in a sense different from ours, closer to their etymological meaning in Latin. Thus, *to communicate* nowadays means to exchange information, but in Shakespeare's day it generally preserved its original meaning 'to share or make common to many'.

From Middle English to Modern

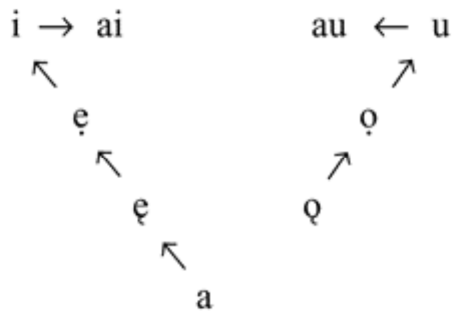
When we come to the vowel changes in Modern English we see the importance of the factors that determined the length of vowels in Middle English. All Middle English long vowels underwent extensive alteration in passing into Modern English, but the short vowels, in accented syllables, remained comparatively stable. If we compare Chaucer's pronunciation of the short vowels with ours, we note only two changes of

importance, those of *a* and *u*. By Shakespeare's day (i.e., at the close of the sixteenth century) Chaucer's /ɑ/ had become an [æ] in pronunciation (*cat, thank, flax*). In some cases this ME *a* represented an OE (*at, apple, back*), and the new pronunciation was therefore a return to approximately the form that the word had had in Old English. It is the usual pronunciation in America and a considerable part of southern England today. The change the /u/ underwent was what is known as unrounding. In Chaucer's pronunciation this vowel was like the *u* in *full*. By the sixteenth century it seems to have become in most words the sound we have in *but* (e.g., *cut, sun; love*, with the Anglo-Norman spelling of *o* for *u*). So far as the short vowels are concerned it is clear that a person today would have little difficulty in understanding the English of any period of the language.

The Great Vowel Shift

The situation is very different when we consider the long vowels. In Chaucer's pronunciation these had still their so-called "continental" value—that is, *a* was pronounced like the *a* in *father* and not as in *name*, *e* was pronounced either like the *e* in *there* or the *a* in *mate*, but not like the *ee* in *meet*, and so with the other vowels. But in the fifteenth century a great change is seen

to be under way. All the long vowels gradually came to be pronounced with a greater elevation of the tongue and closing of the mouth, so that those that could be raised were raised, and those that could not without becoming consonantal (*i*, *u*) became diphthongs. The change may be visualized in the following diagram:



Such a diagram must be taken as only a very rough indication of what happened, especially in the breaking of *i* and *u* into the diphthongs *ai* and *au*. Nor must the changes indicated by the arrows be thought of as taking place successively, but rather as all part of a general movement with slight differences in the speed with which the results were accomplished (or the date at which evidence for them can be found). The effects of the shift can be seen in the following comparison of Chaucer's and Shakespeare's pronunciation:

<i>M.E.</i>	<i>Chaucer</i>		<i>Shakespeare</i>
ī	[fi:f]	five	[faɪv]
ē	[me:də]	meed	[mi:d]
ē	[klɛ:nə]	clean	[kle:n] (now [kli:n])
ā	[na:mə]	name	[ne:m]
ō	[gɔ:tə]	goat	[go:t]
ō	[ro:tə]	root	[ru:t]
ū	[du:n]	down	[daʊn]

Grammatical Features

English grammar in the sixteenth and early seventeenth century is marked more by the survival of certain forms and usages that have since disappeared than by any fundamental developments. The great changes that reduced the inflections of Old English to their modern proportions had already taken place. In the few parts of speech that retain some of their original inflections, the reader of Shakespeare or the Authorized Version is conscious of minor differences of form and in the framing of sentences may note differences of syntax and idiom that, although they attract attention, are not sufficient to interfere seriously with understanding. The more important of these differences we may pass briefly in review.

The Noun

The only inflections retained in the noun were those marking the plural and the possessive singular. In the former the *s*-plural had become so generalized that except for a few nouns like *sheep* and *swine* with unchanged plurals, and a few others like *mice* and *feet* with mutated vowels, we are scarcely conscious of any other forms. In the sixteenth century, however, there are certain survivals of the old weak plural in *-n*. Most of these had given way before the usual *s*-forms: *fon* (foes), *kneen* (knees), *fleen* (fleas). But beside the more modern forms Shakespeare occasionally has *eyen* (eyes), *shoon* (shoes), and *kine*, while the plural *hosen* is occasionally found in other writers. Today, except for the poetical *kine* and mixed plurals like *children* and *brethren*, the only plural of this type in general use is *oxen*.

The Adjective

Because the adjective had already lost all its endings, so that it no longer expressed distinctions of gender, number, and case, the chief interest of this part of speech in the modern period is in the

forms of the comparative and superlative degrees. In the sixteenth century these were not always precisely those now in use. For example, comparatives such as *lenger*, *strenger* remind us that forms like *our elder* were once more common in the language. The two methods commonly used to form the comparative and superlative, with the endings *-er* and *-est* and with the adverbs *more* and *most*, had been customary since Old English times. But there was more variation in their use. Shakespearian comparisons like *honester*, *violentest* are now replaced by the analytical forms. A double comparative or superlative is also fairly frequent in the work of Shakespeare and his contemporaries: *more larger*, *most boldest*, or Mark Antony's *This was the most unkindest cut of all*. The chief development affecting the adjective in modern times has been the gradual settling down of usage so that monosyllables take *-er* and *-est* while most adjectives of two or more syllables (especially those with suffixes like those in *frugal*, *learned*, *careful*, *poetic*, *active*, *famous*) take *more* and *most*.

The Pronoun

The sixteenth century saw the establishment of the personal pronoun in the form that it has had ever since. In attaining this

result three changes were involved: the disuse of *thou, thy, thee*; the substitution of *you* for *ye* as a nominative case; and the introduction of *its* as the possessive of *it*.

(1) In the earliest period of English the distinction between *thou* and *ye* was simply one of number; *thou* was the singular and *ye* the plural form for the second person pronoun. In time, however, a quite different distinction grew up. In the thirteenth century the singular forms (*thou, thy, thee*) were used among familiars and in addressing children or persons of inferior rank, while the plural forms (*ye, your, you*) began to be used as a mark of respect in addressing a superior. In England the practice seems to have been suggested by French usage in court circles, but it finds a parallel in many other modern languages. In any case, the usage spread as a general concession to courtesy until *ye, your, and you* became the usual pronoun of direct address irrespective of rank or intimacy. By the sixteenth century the singular forms had all but disappeared from contexts in which the plural forms were deemed proper and were maintained into the twentieth century only among the Quakers.

(2) Originally a clear distinction was made between the nominative *ye* and the objective *you*. But because both forms are so frequently unstressed, they were often pronounced alike [jə]. A tendency to confuse the nominative and the accusative forms can be observed fairly early, and in the fourteenth century *you* began to be used as a nominative. By a similar substitution *ye* appears in the following century for the objective case, and from this time on the two forms seem to have been used pretty indiscriminately until *ye* finally disappeared. It is true that in the early part of the sixteenth century some writers (Lord Berners, for example) were careful to distinguish the two forms, and in the Authorized Version of the Bible (1611) they are often nicely differentiated: No doubt but *ye* are the people, and wisdom shall die with *you* (Job). On the other hand Ascham and Sir Thomas Elyot appear to make no distinction in the nominative, while Shakespeare says A southwest wind blow on *ye* And blister *you* all over! In *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* occurs the line Stand, sirs, and throw us that *you* have about *ye*, where the two pronouns represent the exact reverse of their historical use. Although in the latter instance, *ye* may owe something to its unemphatic position, as in similar cases it does in Milton, it is evident that there was very little feeling any more for the different functions of the two

words, and in the course of the seventeenth century you becomes the regular form for both cases.

(3) In some ways the most interesting development in the pronoun at this time was the formation of a new possessive neuter, *its*. As we have seen above, the neuter pronoun in Old English was declined *hit*, *his*, *him*, *hit*, which by the merging of the dative and accusative under *hit* in Middle English became *hit*, *his*, *hit*. In unstressed positions *hit* weakened to *it*, and at the beginning of the modern period it was the usual form for the subject and object. *His*, however, remained the proper form of the possessive. Although it was thus identical with the possessive case of *he*, *its* occurrence where we should now use *its* is very common in written English down to the middle of the seventeenth century.

Thus Portia's words *How far that little candle throws his beams are quite natural, as is the Biblical if the salt have lost his savor, wherewith shall it be salted?*

If grammatical gender had survived in English the continued use of *his* when referring to neuter nouns would probably never have seemed strange. But when, with the substitution of natural

gender, meaning came to be the determining factor in the gender of nouns, and all lifeless objects were thought of as neuter, the situation was somewhat different. The personal pronouns of the third person singular, he, she, it, had a distinctive form for each gender in the nominative and objective cases, and a need seems to have been felt for some distinctive form in the possessive case as well. Various substitutes were tried, clearly indicating a desire, conscious or unconscious, to avoid the use of his in the neuter. Thus, we find frequently in the Bible expressions like Two cubits and a half was the length of it and nine cubits was the length thereof. Not infrequently the simple form it was used as a possessive, as when Horatio, describing the ghost in Hamlet, says It lifted up it head, or when the Fool in Lear says: The hedge-sparrow fed the cuckoo so long, That it had it head bit off by it young.

The same use of the pronoun it is seen in the combination it own: We enjoin thee...that there thou leave it, Without more mercy, to it own protection (Winter's Tale). Similarly, the was used in place of the pronoun: growing of the own accord (Holland's Pliny, 1601). Both of these makeshifts are as old as the fourteenth century. It was perhaps inevitable that the possessive of nouns (stone's, horse's) should eventually suggest the

analogical form it's for the possessive of it. (The word was spelled with an apostrophe down to about 1800.) The first recorded instance of this form is in *The Second Book of Madrigals*, published by Nicholas Yonge in 1597,⁵⁰ but, like most novelties of this kind in language, it had probably been in colloquial use for a time before it appeared in print. Nevertheless, it is not likely to have been common even at the end of the sixteenth century, considering the large amount of fairly colloquial English that has come down to us from this period with no trace of such a form. At the beginning of the seventeenth century it was clearly felt as a neologism not yet admitted to good use. There is no instance of it in the Bible (1611) or in any of the plays of Shakespeare printed during his lifetime. In the First Folio of 1623 there are only ten instances, and seven of these were in plays written near the end of the dramatist's career. Milton, although living until 1674, seems to have admitted it but grudgingly to his writings; there are only three occurrences of the word in all his poetry and not many in his prose. Yet so useful a word could hardly fail to win a place for itself among the rank and file of speakers. Toward the close of the seventeenth century its acceptance seems to have gained momentum rapidly, so that to Dryden (1631–1700) the older use of his as a neuter seemed an archaism worthy of comment.

Finally, mention should be made of one other noteworthy development of the pronoun in the sixteenth century. This is the use of *who* as a relative. Refinements in the use of subordinate clauses are a mark of maturity in style. As the loose association of clauses (*parataxis*) gives way to more precise indications of logical relationship and subordination (*hypotaxis*) there is need for a greater variety of words effecting the union.

Old English had no relative pronoun proper. It made use of the definite article (*sē, sēo, þæf*), which, however it was felt in Old English times, strikes us as having more demonstrative force than relative. Sometimes the indeclinable particle *þe* was added (*sē, þe, which, that*) and sometimes *þe* was used alone. At the end of the Old English period the particle *þe* had become the most usual relative pronoun, but it did not long retain its popularity. Early in the Middle English period its place was taken by *þæt* (*that*), and this was the almost universal relative pronoun, used for all genders, throughout the Middle English period. In the fifteenth century which begins to alternate fairly frequently with *that*. At first it referred mostly to neuter antecedents, although occasionally it was used for persons, a use that survives in Our

Father, which art in heaven. But the tendency to employ that as a universal relative has never been lost in the language, and was so marked in the eighteenth century as to provoke Steele to address to the Spectator (No. 78) his well-known “Humble Petition of Who and Which” in protest. It was not until the sixteenth century that the pronoun who as a relative came into use. Occasional instances of such a use occur earlier, but they are quite exceptional. There is no example of the nominative case in Chaucer. Chaucer, however, does use the oblique cases whose and whom (infrequently) as relative pronouns, and it is clear that the use of who as a pure relative began with these forms. Two earlier uses of who are the sources of the new construction: who as an indefinite pronoun (Who hath ears to hear, let him hear; Who steals my purse steals trash) and as an interrogative in indirect questions. The latter appears to have been the more important. The sequence Whom do you want? (direct question), They asked whom you wanted (indirect question), I know the man whom you wanted (relative) is not a difficult one to assume. In any case, our present-day widespread use of who as a relative pronoun is primarily a contribution of the sixteenth century to the language.

The Verb

Even the casual reader of Elizabethan English is aware of certain differences of usage in the verb that distinguish this part of speech from its form in later times. These differences are sometimes so slight as to give only a mildly unfamiliar tinge to the construction. When Lennox asks in *Macbeth*, *Goes the King hence today?* we have merely an instance of the more common interrogative form without an auxiliary, where we should say *Does the king go?* or *Is the king leaving today?* we have merely an instance of the more common interrogative form without an auxiliary, where we should say *Does the king go?* or *Is the king leaving today?* Where we should say *has been* Shakespeare often says *is*: *Is execution done on Cawdor?* and *'Tis unnatural, Even like the deed that's done;* or *Arthur, whom [who] they say is killed tonight.* A very noticeable difference is the scarcity of progressive forms. Polonius asks, *What do you read, my Lord?*—that is, *What are you reading?* The large increase in the use of the progressive is one of the important developments of later times. Likewise the compound participle, *having spoken thus, having decided to make the attempt, etc.,* is conspicuous by its infrequency. There are only three instances in Shakespeare and less than threescore in the Bible. The construction arose in the

sixteenth century. On the other hand, impersonal uses of the verb were much more common than they are today. *It yearns me not, it dislikes me, so please him come* are Shakespearian expressions which in more recent English have been replaced by personal constructions. In addition to such features of Elizabethan verbal usage, certain differences in inflection are more noticeable, particularly the ending of the third person singular of the present indicative, an occasional *-s* in the third person plural, and many forms of the past tense and past participle, especially of strong verbs.

The regular ending of the third person singular *-s, -es* in the whole south and southeastern part of England — that is, the district most influential in the formation of the standard speech — was *-eth* all through the Middle English period. It is universal in Chaucer: *telleth, giveth, saith, doth*, etc. In the fifteenth century, forms with *-s* occasionally appear. These are difficult to account for, since it is not easy to see how the Northern dialect, where they were normal, could have exerted so important an influence upon the language of London and the south. But in the course of the sixteenth century their number increases, especially in writings that seem to reflect the colloquial usage. By the end of the 16th century forms like *tells, gives, says* predominate,

though in some words, such as *doth* and *hath*, the older usage may have been the more common.

Usage and Idiom

Language is not merely a matter of words and inflections. We should neglect a very essential element if we failed to take account of the many conventional features—matters of idiom and usage—that often defy explanation or logical classification but are nevertheless characteristic of the language at a given time and, like other conventions, subject to change. Such a matter as the omission of the article where we customarily use it is an illustration in point. Shakespeare says creeping like snail, with as big heart as thou, in number of our friends, within this mile and half, thy beauty's form in table of my heart, where modern idiom requires an article in all these cases. On the other hand, where we say at length, at last, Shakespeare says at the length, at the last. Again, usage permitted a different placing of the negative—before the verb—as in such expressions as I not doubt, it not appears to me, she not denies it. For a long time English permitted the use of a double negative. We have now discarded it through a false application of mathematical logic to language; but in Elizabethan times it was felt merely as a stronger negative, as

indeed it is today in the instinct of the uneducated. So Shakespeare could say Thou hast spoken no word all this while—nor understood none neither; I know not, nor I greatly care not; Nor this is not my nose neither; First he denied you had in him no right; My father hath no child but I, nor none is like to have; Nor never none shall mistress be of it, save I alone. It is a pity we have lost so useful an intensive.

Perhaps nothing illustrates so richly the idiomatic changes in a language from one age to another as the uses of prepositions. When Shakespeare says I'll rent the fairest house in it after threepence a bay, we should say at; in Our fears in Banquo stick deep, we should say about. The single preposition of shows how many changes in common idioms have come about since 1600: One that I brought up of (from) a puppy; he came of (on) an errand to me; 'Tis pity of (about) him; your name.... I know not, nor by what wonder you do hit of (upon) mine; And not be seen to wink of (during) all the day; it was well done of (by) you; I wonder of (at) their being here together; I am provided of (with) a torchbearer; I have no mind of (for) feasting forth tonight; I were better to be married of (by) him than of another; That did but show thee of (as) a fool. Many more examples could be added. Although matters of idiom and usage generally claim less

attention from students of the language than do sounds and inflections or additions to the vocabulary, no picture of Elizabethan English would be adequate that did not give them a fair measure of recognition.

General Characteristics of the Period

As we survey the period of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries — the period of early Modern English — we recognize certain general characteristics, some of which are exemplified in the foregoing discussion, while others concern the larger spirit of the age in linguistic matters. These may be stated in the form of a brief summary as a conclusion.

First, a conscious interest in the English language and an attention to its problems are now widely manifested. The fifteenth century had witnessed sporadic attempts by individual writers to embellish their style with “aureate terms.” These attempts show in a way a desire to improve the language, at least along certain limited lines. But in the sixteenth century we meet with a considerable body of literature — books and pamphlets, prefaces and incidental observations — defending the language against those who were disposed to compare it unfavorably to

Latin or other modern tongues, patriotically recognizing its position as the national speech, and urging its fitness for learned and literary use. At the same time it is considered worthy of cultivation, and to be looked after in the education of the young. Whereas a century or two before, the upper classes seemed more interested in having their children acquire a correct French accent and sometimes sent them abroad for the purpose, we now find Elyot urging that noblemen's sons should be brought up by those who "speke none englisshe but that which is cleane, polite, perfectly and articulately pronounced, omittinge no lettre or sillable," and observing that he knew some children of noble birth who had "attained corrupte and foule pronounciation" through the lack of such precautions. Numerous books attempt to describe the proper pronounciation of English, sometimes for foreigners but often presumably for those whose native dialect did not conform to the standard of London and the court. Along with this regard for English as an object of pride and cultivation went the desire to improve it in various ways — particularly to enlarge its vocabulary and to regulate its spelling. All of these efforts point clearly to a new attitude toward English, an attitude that makes it an object of conscious and in many ways fruitful consideration.

In the second place, we attain in this period to something in the nature of a standard, something moreover that is recognizably “modern.” The effect of the Great Vowel Shift was to bring the pronunciation within measurable distance of that which prevails today. The influence of the printing press and the efforts of spelling reformers had resulted in a form of written English that offers little difficulty to the modern reader. And the many new words added by the methods already discussed had given us a vocabulary that has on the whole survived. Moreover, in the writings of Spenser and Shakespeare, and their contemporaries generally, we are aware of the existence of a standard literary language free from the variations of local dialect. Although Sir Walter Raleigh might speak with a broad Devonshire pronunciation, and for all we know Spenser and Shakespeare may have carried with them through life traces in their speech of their Lancashire and Warwickshire ancestry, yet when they wrote they wrote a common English without dialectal idiosyncrasies. This, as Puttenham (1589) reminds us, was to be the speech of London and the court. It is not without significance that he adds, “herein we are already ruled by th’ English Dictionaries and other bookes written by learned men, and therefore it needeth none other direction in that behalfe.” However subject to the variability characteristic of a language not yet completely settled,

the written language in the latter part of the sixteenth century is fully entitled to be called Standard English. The regularization of spellings in this written standard can be seen as early as the mid-fifteenth century in the official documents of Chancery.

Thirdly, English in the Renaissance, at least as we see it in books, was much more plastic than now. People felt freer to mold it to their wills. Words had not always distributed themselves into rigid grammatical categories. Adjectives appear as adverbs or nouns or verbs, nouns appear as verbs — in fact, any part of speech as almost any other part. When Shakespeare wrote *stranger'd* with an oath he was fitting the language to his thought, rather than forcing his thought into the mold of conventional grammar. This was in keeping with the spirit of his age. It was in language, as in many other respects, an age with the characteristics of youth — vigor, a willingness to venture, and a disposition to attempt the untried. The spirit that animated Hawkins and Drake and Raleigh was not foreign to the language of their time.

Finally, we note that in spite of all the progress that had been made toward a uniform standard, a good many features of the language were still unsettled. There still existed a considerable

variety of use — alternative forms in the grammar, experiments with new words, variations in pronunciation and spelling. A certain latitude was clearly permitted among speakers of education and social position, and the relation between the literary language and good colloquial English was so close that this latitude appears also in the written language. Where one might say *have wrote* or *have written* with equal propriety, as well as *housen* or *houses*, *shoon* or *shoes*, one must often have been in doubt over which to use. One heard *service* also pronounced *sarvice*, and the same variation occurred in a number of other words (*certain* — *sartin*, *concern* — *consarn*, *divert* — *divart*, *clerk* — *clark*, *smert* — *smart*, etc.). These and many other matters were still unsettled at the close of the period. Their settlement, as we shall see, was one of the chief concerns of the next age.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE APPEAL TO AUTHORITY

The Temper of the Eighteenth Century

The first half of the eighteenth century is commonly designated in histories of literature as the Augustan Age in England. The principal characteristics of this age which affected the course of the English language emerged early and maintained their influence throughout the century, in spite of the eruption of some radical challenges in the final two decades. The eighteenth century sought to retain from the seventeenth century the best features of rational discourse that had been established while rejecting the uncontrolled proliferation of what sober minds regarded as dangerous tendencies in English prose.

In England the age was characterized by a search for stability. One of the first characteristics to be mentioned is a strong sense of order and the value of regulation. Adventurous individualism and the spirit of independence characteristic of the previous era gave way to a desire for system and regularity. This involves conformity to a standard that the consensus recognizes as good. It sets up correctness as an ideal and attempts to formulate rules or

principles by which correctness may be defined and achieved. The most important consideration in the foundation of this standard is reason. The spirit of scientific rationalism in philosophy was reflected in many other domains of thought. A great satisfaction was felt in things that could be logically explained and justified. It must not be supposed, however, that the powerful new current of scientific rationalism swept away the firmly grounded reverence for classical literature. Not only in literature but also in language Latin was looked upon as a model, and classical precedent was often generalized into precept. It is easy to see how a standard having its basis in regularity, justified by reason, and supported by classical authority might be regarded as approaching perfection, and how an age that set much store by elegance and refinement could easily come to believe in this standard as an indispensable criterion of "taste." While continuing to venerate Greece and Rome, eighteenth-century English people were increasingly conscious of ways in which their own achievements could be judged as surpassing those of the ancient world. They could easily come to believe in the essential rightness of their judgment and think that their own ideals could be erected into something like a permanent standard. We may well believe that permanence and stability would seem

like no inconsiderable virtues to a generation that remembered the disorders and changes of the Revolution and Restoration.

The intellectual tendencies here noted are seen quite clearly in the eighteenth-century efforts to standardize, refine, and fix the English language. In the period under consideration discussion of the language takes a new turn. Previously interest had been shown chiefly in such questions as whether English was worthy of being used for writings in which Latin had long been traditional, whether the large additions being made to the vocabulary were justified, and whether a more adequate system of spelling could be introduced. Now for the first time attention was turned to the grammar, and it was discovered that English had no grammar. At any rate its grammar was largely uncodified, unsystematized. The ancient languages had been reduced to rule; one knew what was right and what was wrong. But in English everything was uncertain. One learned to speak and write as one learned to walk, and in many matters of grammatical usage there was much variation even among educated people. This was clearly distasteful to an age that desired above all else an orderly universe. The spontaneous creativeness of a Shakespeare, verbing it with nouns and adjectives, so to speak, sublimely indifferent to rules, untroubled by any considerations in language

save those springing from a sure instinct, had given place to hesitation and uncertainty, so that a man like Dryden confessed that at times he had to translate an idea into Latin in order to decide on the correct way to express it in English.

In its effort to set up a standard of correctness in language the rationalistic spirit of the eighteenth century showed itself in the attempt to settle disputed points logically, that is, by simply reasoning about them, often arriving at entirely false conclusions. The respect for authoritative example, especially for classical example, takes the form of appeals to the analogy of Latin, whereas a different manifestation of the respect for authority is at the bottom of the belief in the power of individuals to legislate in matters of language and accounts for the repeated demand for an English Academy. Finally it is an idea often expressed that English has been and is being daily corrupted, that it needs correction and refinement, and that when the necessary reforms have been effected it should be fixed permanently and protected from change. In other words, it was desired in the eighteenth century to give the English language a polished, rational, and permanent form.

Eighteenth-century attempts to codify the English language

The Eighteenth-century attempts to codify the English language and to direct its course fall under three main heads: (1) to reduce the language to rule and set up a standard of correct usage; (2) to refine it — that is, to remove supposed defects and introduce certain improvements; and (3) to fix it permanently in the desired form.

1. Ascertainment

In the eighteenth century the need for standardization and regulation was summed up in the word *ascertainment*. Dr. Johnson defined *ascertainment* as “a settled rule; an established standard”; and it was in this sense that Swift used the verb in his *Proposal for Correcting, Improving, and Ascertaining the English Tongue*. When reduced to its simplest form the need was for a dictionary that should record the proper use of words and a grammar that should settle authoritatively the correct usages in matters of construction.

2. Refining the Language

The lack of a standard to which all might conform was believed to have resulted in many corruptions that were growing up unchecked. It is the subject of frequent lament that for some time the language had been steadily going down. Such observations are generally accompanied by a regretful backward glance at the good old days. Various periods in the past were supposed to represent the highest perfection of English. It was Dryden's opinion that "from Chaucer the purity of the English tongue began," but he was not so completely convinced as some others that its course had been always downward. For Swift the golden age was that of the great Elizabethans. "The period," he says, "wherein the English tongue received most improvement, I take to commence with the beginning of Queen Elizabeth's reign, and to conclude with the great rebellion in forty-two. From the civil war to this present time, I am apt to doubt whether the corruptions in our language have not at least equaled the refinements of it; and these corruptions very few of the best authors in our age have wholly escaped. During the usurpation, such an infusion of enthusiastic jargon prevailed in every writing, as was not shaken off in many years after. To this succeeded the

licentiousness which entered with the restoration, and from infecting our religion and morals fell to corrupt our language.”

With this opinion Dr. Johnson agreed. In his Dictionary he says, “I have studiously endeavored to collect examples and authorities from the writers before the restoration, whose works I regard as the wells of English undefiled, as the pure sources of genuine diction.” It is curious to find writers later in the century, such as Priestley, Sheridan, and the American Webster, looking back upon the Restoration and the period of Swift himself as the classical age of the language. It is apparent that much of this talk springs merely from a sentimental regard for the past and is to be taken no more seriously than the perennial belief that our children are not what their parents were. Certainly the corruptions that Swift cites seem to us rather trivial. But the significance of such utterances lies in the fact that they reveal an attitude of mind and lead to many attempts in the course of the century to “purify” the language and rid it of supposed imperfections. There have always been, and doubtless always will be, people who feel a strong antipathy toward certain words or expressions or particular constructions, especially those with the taint of novelty about them. Usually such people do not make their objections felt beyond the circle of their friends. But occasionally an individual whose name carries weight and who is

possessed with a crusading spirit offers his or her views to the public. However much the condemned usages may represent mere personal prejudice, they are often regarded by others as veritable faults in the language and continue to be condemned in words that echo those of the original critic until the objections attain a currency and assume a magnitude out of all proportion to their significance. Such seems to have been the case with the strictures of Dean Swift on the English of his day.

In matters of language Dean Swift was a conservative. The things that specifically troubled the dean in his reflections on the current speech were chiefly innovations that he says had been growing up in the last twenty years. One of these was the tendency to clip and shorten words that should have retained their full polysyllabic dignity. He would have objected to *taxi, phone, bus, ad*, and the like.

A second innovation that Swift opposed was the tendency to contract verbs like *drudg'd, disturb'd, rebuk'd, fledg'd*. A third innovation that aroused Swift's ire has to do with certain words then enjoying a considerable vogue among wits and people of fashion. They had even invaded the pulpit. Young preachers, fresh from the universities, he says, "use all the modern terms of

art, *sham*, *banter*, *mob*, *bubble*, *bully*, *cutting*, *shuffling*, and *palming*.

3. The Desire to Fix the Language

One of the most ambitious hopes of the eighteenth century was to stabilize the language, to establish it in a form that would be permanent. Swift talked about “fixing” the language, and the word was echoed for fifty years by lesser writers who shared his desire and, like him, believed in the possibility of realizing it. But that aim was not achieved.

The Proposal for an English Academy

There can be little doubt that the vital incentive to the establishment of an academy in England came from the example of France and Italy. The suggestion of an English Academy occurred early in the seventeenth century. With the Restoration, discussion of an English Academy became much more frequent. Shortly thereafter the idea of an academy received support from several influential persons, notably from Dryden and John Evelyn.

By the beginning of the eighteenth century the ground had been prepared, and the time was ripe for an authoritative plan for an academy. With the example of Richelieu and the French Academy doubtless in his mind, Swift addressed a letter in 1712 to the earl of Oxford, Lord Treasurer of England. It was published under the title *A Proposal for Correcting, Improving, and Ascertaining the English Tongue*. After the usual formalities he says: "My Lord, I do here in the name of all the learned and polite persons of the nation complain to your Lordship as *first minister*, that our language is extremely imperfect. The remedy he proposes is an academy, though he does not call it by that name. The publication of Swift's *Proposal* marks the culmination of the movement for an English Academy. Yet nothing came of Swift's *Proposal*. So, the academy was not established.

Dr. Johnson's Dictionary

The publication in 1755 of *A Dictionary of the English Language*, by Samuel Johnson, was hailed as a great achievement. True, it had its defects but it had positive virtues. It exhibited the English vocabulary much more fully than had ever been done before. It offered a spelling, fixed, even if sometimes badly, that could be accepted as standard. It supplied thousands

of quotations illustrating the use of words. While he was still engaged on the *Dictionary* he wrote: "I have laboured to refine our language to grammatical purity, and to clear it from colloquial barbarisms, licentious idioms, and irregular combinations." Johnson himself envisaged his work as performing the same function as the dictionary of an academy. Speaking of pronunciation, he says, "one great end of this undertaking is to fix the English language."

Grammar Books in the Mid-Modern Period

William Loughton, Schoolmaster at Kensington, whose *Practical Grammar of the English Tongue* (1734) went through five editions, inveighs against those who "have attempted to force our Language (contrary to its Nature) to the Method and Rules of the Latin Grammar." In 1761 Joseph Priestley published *The Rudiments of English Grammar*. It was followed by Robert Lowth's *Short Introduction to English Grammar* (1762). *The British Grammar* by James Buchanan appeared in the same year. In 1784 Noah Webster published the second part of *A Grammatical Institute of the English Language*, which enjoyed much prestige in America and not a little circulation in England.

Eighteenth century grammarians aimed to do three things: (1) to codify the principles of the language and reduce it to rule; (2) to settle disputed points and decide cases of divided usage; and (3) to point out common errors or what were supposed to be errors, and thus correct and improve the language.

Prescriptive Grammar

To prescribe and to proscribe seem to have been coordinate aims of the grammarians. Many of the conventions now accepted and held up as preferable in our handbooks were first stated in this period. The prescriptive distinction between the two verbs *lie* and *lay* was first made in the second half of the eighteenth century. The preference for *different from* (rather than *different than* or *to*) and the proscription of *between you and I* are among the attitudes which, generally speaking, have been subsequently approved in the standard speech. Finally we may note that the eighteenth century is responsible for the condemnation of the double negative. Lowth stated the rule that we are now bound by: “Two Negatives in English destroy one another, or are equivalent to an Affirmative.”

The Doctrine of Usage

In the latter half of the eighteenth century we find the beginnings of the modern doctrine that the most important criterion of language is usage. Thus John Hughes says in his essay *Of Style*

(1698) that “general acceptation...is the only standard of speech.” The person who more wholeheartedly than anyone else advocated the doctrine, however, was Joseph Priestley. In his *Rudiments of English Grammar* (1761) he repeatedly insisted upon the importance of usage. “It must be allowed, that the custom of speaking is the original and only just standard of any language.” Of almost equal importance in representing this point of view, and perhaps more influential in giving it currency, was George Campbell. “Language is purely a species of fashion.... It is not the business of grammar, as some critics seem preposterously to imagine, to give law to the fashions which regulate our speech.”

The Expansion of the British Empire

The English settlements at Jamestown and Plymouth were the beginning of a process of colonization in North America that soon gave to England the Atlantic seaboard. Meanwhile England was getting a foothold in India and in 1600 the East India Company was founded to promote this trade, establishing settlements at Madras, Bombay, and Calcutta.

The beginnings of the English occupation of Australia also occurred in the eighteenth century. The colonizing of Africa was largely the work of the nineteenth century. England seized the Dutch settlement at Cape Town. From this small beginning

sprang the control of England over a large part of South Africa. The financial embarrassments of Egypt and Britain's acquisition of control over the Suez Canal led to the British protectorate over the region of the Nile.

The most obvious effects of English expansion are to be seen in the vocabulary. New territories mean new experiences, new activities, new products, all of which are in time reflected in the language. Trade routes have always been important avenues for the transmission of ideas and words. Contact with Native Americans resulted in a number of characteristic words such as *caribou*, *moose*, *skunk*, *tomahawk* and *totem*. From other parts of America, we have derived many more words, chiefly through Spanish. Thus we have in English Mexican words such as *chili*, *chocolate*, and *tomato*; from Cuba and the West Indies come *barbecue*, *canoe*, *hurricane*, *maize*, *potato*, and *tobacco*. From India come *Brahman*, *cashmere*, and *rupee*. From Africa, we obtain *banana*, *chimpanzee*, *gorilla* and *zebra*. Australia later contributed new terms to the general language. *Boomerang* and *kangaroo* are interesting examples of native words that have passed into universal use. Thus, one of the reasons for the cosmopolitan character of the English vocabulary today is seen to be the multitude of contacts the English language has had with other tongues in widely scattered parts of the world.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE NINETEENTH CENTURY AND AFTER

Influences Affecting the Language

The events of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries affecting the English-speaking countries have been of great political and social importance, but in their effect on the language they have not been revolutionary. The success of the British on the sea in the course of the Napoleonic Wars, culminating in Nelson's famous victory at Trafalgar in 1805, left England in a position of undisputed naval supremacy and gave it control over most of the world's commerce. The war against Russia in the Crimea (1854–1856) and the contests with princes in India had the effect of again turning English attention to the East. The great reform measures — the reorganization of parliament, the revision of the penal code and the poor laws, the restrictions placed on child labor, and the other industrial reforms — were important factors in establishing English society on a more democratic basis. They lessened the distance between the upper and the lower classes and greatly increased the opportunities for the mass of the population to share in the economic and cultural advantages that became available in the course of the century. The establishment

of the first cheap newspaper (1816) and of cheap postage (1840) and the improved means of travel and communication brought about by the railroad, the steamboat, and the telegraph had the effect of uniting more closely the different parts of Britain and of spreading the influence of the standard speech. During the first half of the twentieth century the world wars and the troubled periods following them affected the life of almost everyone and left their mark on the language. At the same time, the growth in importance of some of England's larger colonies, their eventual independence, and the rapid development of the United States have given increased significance to the forms of English spoken in these territories and have led their populations to the belief that their use of the language is as entitled to be considered a standard as that of Great Britain.

Some of these events and changes are reflected in the English vocabulary. But more influential in this respect are the great developments in science and the rapid progress that has been made in every field of intellectual activity in the last 200 years. Periods of great enterprise and activity seem generally to be accompanied by a corresponding increase in new words. This is the more true when all classes of the people participate in such

activity, both in work and play, and share in its benefits. Accordingly, the great developments in industry, the increased public interest in sports and amusements, and the many improvements in the mode of living, in which even the humblest worker has shared, have all contributed to the vocabulary. The last two centuries offer an excellent opportunity to observe the relation between a civilization and the language which is an expression of it.

The Growth of Science

The most striking thing about our present-day civilization is probably the part that science has played in bringing it to pass. We have only to think of the progress that has been made in medicine and the sciences auxiliary to it, such as bacteriology, biochemistry, and the like, to realize the difference that marks off our own day from that of only a few generations ago in the diagnosis, treatment, prevention, and cure of disease. Or we may pause to reflect upon the relatively short period that separates the Wright brothers, making history's first powered and controlled airplane flight, from the landings of astronauts on the moon, the operation of a space shuttle, and the voyages of spacecraft past the outer planets of the solar system. In every field of science,

pure and applied, there has been need in the last two centuries for thousands of new terms. The great majority of these are technical words known only to the specialist, but a certain number of them in time become familiar to the layperson and pass into general use.

In the field of medicine this is particularly apparent. We speak familiarly of *anemia*, *appendicitis*, *arteriosclerosis*, difficult as the word is, of *bronchitis*, *diphtheria*, and numerous other diseases and ailments. We use with some sense of their meaning words like *bacteriology*, *immunology*, *orthodontics*, and the acronym *AIDS* (*acquired immune deficiency syndrome*). We maintain clinics, administer an antitoxin or an anesthetic, and vaccinate for smallpox. We have learned the names of drugs like *aspirin*, *iodine*, *insulin*, *morphine*, and we acquire without effort the names of antibiotics, such as *penicillin*, *streptomycin*, and a whole family of *sulfa* compounds. We speak of *adenoids*, *endocrine glands*, and *hormones* and know the uses of the stethoscope, the EKG (electrocardiogram), and the CAT scan (computerized axial tomography). We refer to the combustion of food in the body as metabolism, distinguish between proteins and carbohydrates, know that a dog can digest bones because he has certain enzymes or digestive fluids in his stomach, and say that a

person who has the idiosyncrasy of being made ill by certain foods has an allergy. Cholesterol is now a part of everyone's vocabulary, and there is an awareness that some fats are polyunsaturated. All of these words have come into use during the nineteenth and, in some cases, the twentieth century.

In almost every other field of science the same story could be told. In the field of electricity words like *dynamo*, *commutator*, *alternating current*, *arc light* have been in the language since about 1870. Physics has made us familiar with terms like *calorie*, *electron*, *ionization*, *ultraviolet rays*, *quantum mechanics*, and *relativity*, though we don't always have an exact idea of what they mean. The development of *atomic energy* and *nuclear weapons* has given us *radioactive*, *hydrogen bomb*, *chain reaction*, *fallout*, and *meltdown*. In recent years *laser*, *superconducting supercollider*, *quasar*, and *pulsar* have come into common use; and *black holes*, *quarks*, *the big bang model*, and *superstrings* have captured the popular imagination. Chemistry has contributed so many common words that it is difficult to make a selection — *alkali*, *benzine*, *creosote*, *cyanide*, *formaldehyde*, *nitroglycerine*, *radium*, to say nothing of such terms as *biochemical*, *petrochemical*, and the like. The psychologist has taught us to speak of *schizophrenia*, *extrovert*

and *introvert, behaviorism, inhibition, defense mechanism, inferiority complex, bonding, and psychoanalysis*. Originally scientific words and expressions such as *ozone, natural selection, stratosphere, DNA* (for *deoxyribo-nudeic acid*) became familiar through the popularity of certain books or scientific reports in magazines and newspapers. Among the most publicized events since the 1960s have been the achievements of space and engineering in the exploration of space. In addition to astronaut and cosmonaut, space science has given us dozens of new words, especially compounds like *spacecraft, space shuttle, launch pad, countdown, blast off, flyby, command module*. Consciously or unconsciously, we have become scientifically minded in the last few generations, and our vocabularies reflect this extension of our consciousness and interest.

Automobile, Film, Broadcasting, Computer

Scientific discoveries and inventions do not always influence the language in proportion to their importance. It is doubtful whether the radio and motion pictures are more important than the telephone, but they have brought more new words into general use. Such additions to the vocabulary depend more upon the degree to which the discovery or invention enters into the life of

the community. This can be seen especially in the many new words or new uses of old words that have resulted from the popularity of the automobile and the numerous activities associated with it. Many an old word is now used in a special sense. Thus we park a car, and the verb to park scarcely suggests to the average driver anything except leaving his or her car along the side of a street or road or in a parking space. But the word is an old one, used as a military term (to park cannon) and later in reference to carriages. The word *automobile* is new, but such words as *sedan* (saloon in Britain) and *couch* are terms adapted from earlier types of vehicles. The American *truck* is the British *lorry* to which we may attach a trailer. We have learned new words or new meanings in *carburetor*, *spark plug* (British *sparking plug*), *choke*, *clutch*, *gearshift* (British *gear lever*), *piston rings*, *differential*, *universal*, *steering wheel*, *shock absorber*, *radiator*, *hood* (British *bonnet*), *windshield* (in Britain *windscreen*), *bumper*, *chassis*, *hubcap*, *power steering*, *automatic transmission*, and *turbocharger*. We engage *cruise control*, have a *blowout*, use *radial tires*, *carry a spare*, *drive a convertible* or *station wagon* (British *estate car*), and put the car in a *garage*. We may *tune up* the engine or *stall it*, or we may *skid*, *cut in*, *sideswipe* another car and be fined for *speeding* or running a *traffic light*. We must buy *gas* in America and *petrol* in Britain.

Many more examples could be added to terms familiar to every motorist, to illustrate further what is already sufficiently clear, the way in which a new thing that becomes genuinely popular makes demands upon and extends the resources of the language. The same principle might be illustrated by film, radio, and television. The words *cinema* and *moving picture* date from 1899, whereas the alternative *motion picture* is somewhat later. *Screen, reel, film, scenario, projector, close-up, fade-out* are now common, and although the popularity of *three-D* (or 3-D) as a cinematic effect was short-lived, the word is still used. The word radio in the sense of a receiving station dates from about 1925, and we get the first hint of television as early as 1904. Since many of the terms from radio broadcasting were applicable in the later development of television, it is not surprising to find a common vocabulary of broadcasting that includes *broadcast* itself, *aerial, antenna, lead-in, loudspeaker, stand by, and solid-state*. Words like *announcer, reception, microphone, and transmitter* have acquired special meanings sometimes more common than their more general senses. The abbreviations *FM* (for *frequency modulation*) and *AM* (for *amplitude modulation*) serve regularly in radio broadcasting for the identification of stations, while terms associated with television include *cable TV, teleprompter, videotape, VCR, and DVD*. The related

development of increasingly refined equipment for the recording of sound since Thomas Edison's invention of the *phonograph* in 1877 has made the general consumer aware of *stereo* and *stereophonic*, *quad* and *quadraphonic*, *tweeter*, *woofer*, *tape deck*, *reel-to-reel*, and *compact disc* or *CD*.

The first electronic digital computers date from World War II, and a few terms have been in general use since then. New meanings of *program*, *language*, *memory*, and *hardware* are familiar to people who have never used a computer. With the widespread manufacturing and marketing of personal computers during the 1980s, a much larger number of English speakers found the need for computer terms in their daily work: *PC* itself, *RAM* (*random-access memory*), *ROM* (*read-only memory*), *DOS* (*disk operating system*), *microprocessor*, *byte*, *cursor*, *modem*, *software*, *hacker*, *hard-wired*, *download*, and new meanings of *read*, *write*, *mouse*, *terminal*, *chip*, *network*, *workstation*, *windows*, and *virus*. The use of *bug* for a problem in running a computer program is sometimes traced in computer lore to an actual moth residing in the Mark II at Harvard in 1945. It was discovered by Grace Hopper and is taped in the logbook for September 9, 1945. As it turns out, however, the 1972 Supplement to the *OED* records *bug* for a problem in technology

as early as 1889, by Thomas Edison working on his phonograph. Admiral Hopper may have a stronger claim to the first use of *debug*.

The World Wars

As another example of how great developments or events leave their mark upon language we may observe some of the words that came into English between 1914 and 1918 as a direct consequence of World War I. Some of these were military terms representing new methods of warfare, such as *air raid*, *antiaircraft gun*, *tank*, and *blimp*. *Gas mask* and *liaison officer* were new combinations with a military significance. *Camouflage* was borrowed from French, where it had formerly been a term of the scene-painter's craft, but it caught the popular fancy and was soon used half facetiously for various forms of disguise or misrepresentation. Old words were in some cases adapted to new uses. *Sector* was used in the sense of a specific portion of the fighting line; *barrage*, originally an artificial barrier like a dam in a river, designated a protective screen of heavy artillery or machine-gun fire; *dud*, a general word for any counterfeit thing, was specifically applied to a shell that did not explode; and *ace*

acquired the meaning of a crack airman, especially one who had brought down five of the enemy's planes. In a number of cases a word that had had only limited circulation in the language now came into general use. Thus *hand grenade* goes back to 1661 but attained new currency during the war. Other expressions already in the language but popularized by the war were *dugout*, *machine gun*, *periscope*, *no man's land*, and even the popular designation of an American soldier, *doughboy*, which was in colloquial use in the United States as early as 1867. *Blighty* was a popular bit of British army slang, derived from India and signifying Britain or home, and was often applied to a wound that sent a man back to Britain. Other expressions such as *slacker*, *trench foot*, *cootie*, and *war bride* were either struck off in the heat of the moment or acquired a poignant significance from the circumstances under which they were used.

It would seem that World War II was less productive of memorable words, as it was of memorable songs. Nevertheless it made its contribution to the language in the form of certain new words, new meanings, or an increased currency for expressions that had been used before. In connection with the *air raid*, so prominent a feature of the war, we have the words and expressions *alert* (air-raid warning), *blackout*, *blitz* (German

Blitzkrieg, literally ‘lightning war’), *blockbuster*, *dive-bombing*, *evacuate*, air-raid *shelter*. The words *beachhead*, *parachutist*, *paratroop*, *landing strip*, *crash landing*, *roadblock*, *jeep*, *fox hole* (as a shelter for one or two men), *bulldozer* (an American word used in a new sense), *decontamination*, *task force* (a military or naval unit assigned to the carrying out of a particular operation), *resistance movement*, and *radar* are not in the first edition of the *OED* or its 1933 Supplement. *To spearhead* an attack, *to mop up*, and *to appease* were new verbs or old verbs with a new military or political significance. *Flak* (antiaircraft fire) was taken over from German, where it is an abbreviation of *Fliegerabwehrkanone*, ‘antiaircraft gun’. *Commando*, a word that goes back to the Boer War, acquired a new and specialized meaning. Some words that were either new or that enjoyed great currency during the war — *priority*, *tooling up*, *bottleneck*, *ceiling* (upper limit), *backlog*, *stockpile* — have become a part of the vocabulary of civilian life, while *lend-lease* has passed into history. The aftermath of the war gave us such expressions as *iron curtain*, *cold war*, *fellow traveler*, *front organization*, *police state*, all with a very special connotation.

English World-Wide

In the various parts of the former British Empire, as in the United States, the English language has developed differences that distinguish it from the language of England. In Australasia, Africa, South Asia, and Canada, peculiarities of pronunciation and vocabulary have grown up that mark off national and areal varieties from the dialect of the mother country and from one another. These peculiarities are partly such as arise in communities separated by time and space, and are partly due to the influence of a new environment. In some countries the most striking changes are the result of imperfect learning and systematic adaptations by speakers of other languages. Differences of nature and material civilization, and generally contact with some foreign tongue, are clearly reflected in the vocabulary.

1. Australia and New Zealand

In Australia it has been well said, "It is probably not too much to say that there never was an instance in history when so many new words were needed, and that there never will be again, for never did settlers come, nor can they ever come again, upon

Flora and Fauna so completely different from anything seen by them before. An oak in America is still a *Quercus*, not as in Australia a *Casuarina*. But with the whole tropical region intervening it was to be expected that in the South Temperate Zone many things would be different, and such expectation was amply fulfilled." Australian English uses many words that would not be understood in England or America. Some of these are old words that have acquired new meanings by being applied to new things. Thus the term *robin* is used for various birds not known in Europe. The word *jackass* (shortened from *laughing jackass*) means a bird whose cry is like a donkey's bray. Other words have been borrowed from the aboriginal languages of Australia and from Maori in New Zealand. *Kangaroo* and *boomerang* have become general English, but *wombat* is still chiefly Australian because it is the name of an Australian animal. The Australian calls a rowdy street loafer a *larrikan*. A *swagman* is a man traveling through the *bush* (back country) carrying a *swag* (tramp's bundle). Where an American talks of a *ranch*, the Australian speaks of a *station* and, like us, distinguishes between a *sheep station* and a *cattle station*. A *boundary rider* is one who patrols an estate and keeps the owner informed concerning every part of it. The English of Australia not only is characterized by

interesting differences of vocabulary but varies strikingly in pronunciation from the received standard of England.

2. South Africa

The same thing is true in a somewhat different way of Africa, the most multilingual continent on earth. The present Republic of South Africa had been occupied successively by the Bushmen, Hottentots, Bantus, Portuguese, and Dutch before the English settlers came. From all these sources, but especially from Dutch and its South African development, Afrikaans, the English language has acquired elements. A few words that occurred earlier in peculiarly South African contexts have passed into the general English vocabulary. In addition to *apartheid* and *veldt* (or *veld*), which retain their original associations, British and American speakers use *commando*, *commandeer*, and *trek* in contexts that no longer reflect their South African history. The great majority of Afrikanerisms (i.e., words and expressions borrowed from Dutch and Afrikaans) would still be generally meaningless in other parts of the English-speaking world yet are quite common in the daily life of South Africans. A recently compiled list of words and phrases that South Africans themselves consider to be characteristic of their variety of

English includes *biltong* (strips of dried meat), *braaivleis* (a barbecue), *donga* (ravine), *gogga* (insect), *koeksisters* (a confection), *kopje* (hill), *lekker* (nice), *mealies* (Indian corn), *ou* (fellow, U.S. *guy*), *spruit* (gully), *stoep* (verandah, U.S. *stoop*), and *veldskoен* (hide-shoes). As in Australian English, a number of good English words are used in quite new senses. South African racial policies gave a new meaning to *location* as an area in which black Africans are required to live. *Lands* in South Africa are just those portions of a farm that can be used for cultivation of crops, *camp* refers to the fenced-in portion of a farm, and the *leopard* (Afrikaans *tier*, from *tyger*) is sometimes called a *tiger*.

In pronunciation the English of South Africa has been much influenced by the pronunciation of Afrikaans and to a lesser extent by the speech of many Scottish schoolmasters. To Afrikaans it apparently owes not only the peculiar modification of certain vowels (e.g., [pen] for *pin*; [kɛb] for *cab*, etc.), but also its higher pitch and the tendency to omit one of two or more consonants at the end of a word (e.g., *tex* for *text*). South African shares with American English the general disposition to pronounce the *r* when it appears in the spelling and to give full

value to unaccented syllables (*extraordinary*, rather than the English *extraord'n'ry*).

3. West and East Africa

In other parts of sub-Saharan Africa that were once British colonies and are now independent countries, the English language has a complex relationship to the many African languages. Ghana, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Kenya, Uganda, and other former colonies have a choice of retaining their colonial linguistic inheritance or rejecting it. In Nigeria three main African languages — Hausa, Yoruba, and Igbo — and scores of languages spoken by smaller groups exist alongside English. Although only a tiny minority of the population speaks English, almost always as a second language, it is the official language of the country. Ethnic jealousies that would arise from the selection of one of the African languages, and the advantages of English for communication both internally and internationally, are sufficient to overcome the reluctance toward using a colonial language. Swahili is the official language in Tanzania, but government business is routinely transacted in English.

The Bantu language Kiswahili is the most important African language throughout East Africa, and from its influence the East African variety of English has acquired some of its characteristic phonological patterns (for example, the lack of [ð]/[θ] as in [zɪsɪŋ] *this thing*). From Kiswahili also have come loanwords that have passed into international currency: *safari*, *simba* (lion), *bwana* (master), *jambo* (hello).

4. South Asia

The issues concerning English in India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Nepal are similar in many respects to those in Africa except that a clearly identifiable South Asian variety of English has emerged over the years. Certain pronunciations result from the systematic influence of Indian languages. For speakers of the variety of Hindi that does not permit *sk*, *st*, and *sp* at the beginning of words, English *station* is regularly pronounced with an initial vowel [ɪste:ʃən]. In some varieties of Indian English [v] and [w] are not distinguished, and [t], [d], [l], and [r] are pronounced with retroflexion.

5. Singapore, Malaysia, Hong Kong

The development of English as a second language in the Pacific rim is especially interesting because of the influence of background languages (the Chinese dialects Hokkien, Cantonese, and Mandarin; Malay; the southern Indian Tamil) and because of the effects of different language policies instituted by the various governments. During the 1970s a national fervor in Malaysia brought about a policy of promoting Bahasa Malay as the official language, and the use of English declined rapidly. Recently, the Malaysian government has quietly begun to reemphasize English.

In Singapore the changing relationship between English and the Asian languages has been in a sense the reverse of that in Malaysia. With English as one of the four official languages and the main medium for administration, commerce, industry, and education, the country has prospered in international trade and in its domestic economy. However, key government leaders, including the founder of the independent state, Lee Kuan Yew, have expressed concern over the loss of Asian values and have begun to promote the use of Mandarin.

Hong Kong, although more than a thousand miles across the South China Sea from Singapore, has similarities in the use of English because of its British colonial history. The main difference is in the relatively homogeneous population, which is 97 percent Chinese. English is much less frequently used for oral communication among Hong Kong's Cantonese-speaking Chinese than among the Chinese in Singapore.

6. The Caribbean

For most of the Anglophone Caribbean islands, however, including Jamaica, Barbados, Trinidad and Tobago, the Leeward Islands, and the Windward Islands, the most relevant languages in contact are those of the west coast of Africa. Ewe, Twi, Efik, Yoruba, Ibo, Hausa, and other African languages were spoken by slaves who were brought to the islands during the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries. In addition to the syllable-timed rhythm that we have seen in other varieties of world English, final syllables in Jamaican Creole frequently have rising tone, reflecting the West African tone language spoken by the slaves, who carried their own phonology into their reinterpretation of a Germanic language with light and heavy stresses.

Despite gaps in the written records of both the early forms of Caribbean English and of the African source languages, continuing lexicographical efforts have revealed much about the complex history of English in this part of the world. A large number of words can be traced clearly to African languages.

7. *Canada*

Canadian English has much in common with that of the United States while retaining a few features of British pronunciation and spelling. Where alternative forms exist the likelihood for a particular choice to be British or American varies with region, education, and age. British items such as *chips*, *serviette*, and *copse* tend to occur more frequently in the West, while the more common American choices *French fries*, *napkin*, and *grove* tend to occur in the East. British spellings such as *colour* and pronunciations such as *schedule* with an initial [ʃ] occur most frequently throughout Canada among more highly educated and older speakers. In addition there are a number of words with meanings that are neither British nor American but peculiarly Canadian. Thus one finds *aboiteau* (dam), *Blue nose* (Nova Scotian), *Creditiste* (member of the Social Credit party), *Digby*

chicken (smoke-cured herring), *mukluk* (Inuit boot), *reeve* (chairman of a municipal council), *salt-chuck* (ocean), and *skookum* (powerful, brave).

The Oxford English Dictionary

In the attitude of the Society for Pure English, as distinguished from most purist efforts in the past, it is impossible not to see the influence of a great work that came into being in the latter half of the nineteenth century. About 1850 the inadequacy of the existing dictionaries of the English language began to be acutely felt. A formal “Proposal for the Publication of a New English Dictionary by the Philological Society” was issued in 1851. The two principal aims of the new project were to record every word that could be found in English from about the year 1000 and to exhibit the history of each — its forms, its various spellings, and all its uses and meanings, past and present. The last-named feature was especially to be shown by a full selection of quotations from the whole range of English writings.

The first editor appointed to deal with the mass of material being assembled was Herbert Coleridge, already mentioned. Upon his

sudden death in 1861 at the age of thirty-one, he was succeeded by Furnivall, then in his thirty-sixth year. For a time work went forward with reasonable speed, but then it gradually slowed down, partly because of Furnivall's increasing absorption in other interests. Meanwhile James A. H. Murray, a Scottish schoolmaster with philological tastes, had been approached by certain publishers to edit a dictionary to rival those of Webster and Worcester. After the abandonment of this project Murray was drawn into the Philological Society's enterprise, and in 1879 a formal agreement was entered into with the Oxford University Press whereby this important publishing house was to finance and publish the society's dictionary and Murray was to be its editor. From this time on the work was pushed with new energy and in 1884 the first installment, covering part of the letter A, was issued. By 1900 four and a half volumes had been published, extending as far as the letter H. World War I made serious inroads in the dictionary staff, and progress was for a time retarded. But in 1928 the final section was issued, just seventy years after the Philological Society had passed its now notable resolution looking toward "A New English Dictionary."

In 1897 William A. Craigie, recently called to Oxford from the University of St. Andrews, joined the staff and in 1901 became a third editor. Finally, in 1914, Charles T. Onions, who had been working with Dr. Murray since 1895, was appointed the fourth member of the editorial staff. Two of the editors were knighted in recognition of their services to linguistic scholarship, Murray in 1908 and Craigie in 1928. But the list of editors does not tell the story of the large number of skillful and devoted workers who sifted the material and did much preliminary work on it. Nor would the enterprise have been possible at all without the generous support of the Oxford University Press and the voluntary help of thousands who furnished quotations. The dictionary was originally known by the name *A New English Dictionary on Historical Principles (NED)*, although in 1895 the title *The Oxford English Dictionary (OED)* was added and has since become the standard designation.

The influence of this great publication — the greatest dictionary of any language in the world — has been far-reaching. Its authority was recognized from the appearance of the first installment. It has provided a wealth of exact data on which many questions relating to the history of the language have been resolved. But it has had a further important effect that was

scarcely contemplated by the little committee of the Philological Society to which it owed its inception. It has profoundly influenced the attitude of many people toward language, and toward the English language in particular.

CHAPTER SIX

THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN AMERICA

The Settlement of America

The English language was brought to America by colonists from England who settled along the Atlantic seaboard in the seventeenth century. It was therefore the language spoken in England at that time, the language spoken by Shakespeare and Milton and Bunyan. In the peopling of this country three great periods of European immigration are to be distinguished. The first extends from the settlement of Jamestown in 1607 to the end of colonial times. This may be put conveniently at 1787, when Congress finally approved the Federal Constitution, or better, 1790, when the last of the colonies ratified it and the first census was taken. At this date the population numbered approximately four million people, 95 percent of whom were living east of the Appalachian Mountains, and 90 percent were from various parts of the British Isles. The second period covers the expansion of the original thirteen colonies west of the Appalachians, at first into the South and into the Old Northwest Territory, ending finally at the Pacific. This era may be said to close with the Civil War, about 1860, and was marked by the

arrival of fresh immigrants from two great sources, Ireland and Germany. The failure of the potato crop in Ireland in 1845 precipitated a wholesale exodus to America, a million and a half emigrants coming in the decade or so that followed. At about the same time the failure of the revolution in Germany (1848) resulted in the migration of an equal number of Germans. Many of the latter settled in certain central cities such as Cincinnati, Milwaukee, and St. Louis or became farmers in the Middle West. The third period, the period since the Civil War, is marked by an important change in the source from which our immigrants have been derived. In the two preceding periods, and indeed up to about 1890, the British Isles and the countries of northern Europe furnished from 75 to 90 percent of all who came to this country. Even in the last quarter of the nineteenth century more than a million Scandinavians, about one-fifth of the total population of Norway and Sweden, settled here, mainly in the upper Mississippi valley. But since about 1890 great numbers from Southern Europe and the Slavic countries have poured in. Just before World War I, Italians alone were admitted to the number of more than 300,000 a year, and of our annual immigration of more than a million, representatives of the east and south European countries constituted close to 75 percent.

Outside the patterns of European immigration was the forced immigration of Africans through the slave trade that began in the seventeenth century and continued until the mid-nineteenth. There are presently some 25 million African Americans in the United States, mostly settled in the South and in the larger cities of the North. Finally, one should note the influx during the mid-twentieth century of Mexican, Puerto Rican, and other Hispanic immigrants. Extreme economic imbalances among the countries of the Western Hemisphere have caused a sharp increase in migration, both legal and illegal, to the United States during the past two decades.

Uniformity of American English

In this necessarily rapid survey some emphasis has been laid on the geographical and ethnic groups represented in the settlement of different parts of the country. The reason for this emphasis will appear later. But it been equally the intention to show that except for a few districts, such as the region around Massachusetts Bay and the tidewater section of Virginia, the most prominent characteristic of the occupation of the United States is the constant mingling of settlers from one part with settlers from other parts.

Linguistically the circumstances under which the American population spread over the country have had one important consequence. It has repeatedly been observed, in the past as well as at the present day, especially by travelers from abroad, that the English spoken in America shows a high degree of uniformity. We may excuse the patriotism that inspired some of these remarks, remembering that Cooper was writing at a time when Americans often felt the need for dwelling on the advantages of their country, but the fact remains that the uniformity of American English seems to have been something generally recognized at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

The merging of regional differences through the mixture of the population that has been described has been promoted since by a certain mobility that characterizes the American people. This is not to deny that currents contrary to standardization have always run through American speech communities. At least nine varieties of American English have enough coherence within themselves and distinction from other varieties, to warrant their description as separate dialects. Raven I. McDavid, Jr., who spent years recording American dialects for the Linguistic Atlas, confirmed the conclusions of the less systematic observers

quoted above: “To those familiar with the situation in European countries, such as France or Italy or even England, dialect differences in American English are relatively small.

Archaic Features in American English

A quality often attributed to American English is archaism, the preservation of old features of the language that have gone out of use in the standard speech of England. American pronunciation as compared with that of London is somewhat old-fashioned. It has qualities that were characteristic of English speech in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The preservation of the *r* in General American and a flat *a* in *fast*, *path*, etc. are two such that were abandoned in southern England at the end of the eighteenth century. In many little ways standard American English is reminiscent of an older period of the language. Most Americans pronounce *either* and *neither* with the vowel of *teeth* or *beneath*, while in Britain an alternate pronunciation has developed since the American colonies were established and the more usual pronunciation is now with an initial diphthong [aɪ]. The American use of *gotten* in place of *got* as the past participle of *get* always impresses the British of today as an old-fashioned feature not to be expected in the speech of a people that prides

itself on being up-to-date. It was the usual form in Britain two centuries ago. American English has kept a number of old words or old uses of words no longer used in Britain. Americans still use *mad* in the sense of angry, as Shakespeare and his contemporaries did, and they have kept the general significance of *sick* without restricting it to nausea. They still speak of *rare* meat, whereas the British now say *underdone*. *Platter* is a common word in the United States but is seldom used anymore in Britain except in poetry. Americans have kept the picturesque old word *fall* as the natural word for the season. They learn *autumn*, the word used in Britain, in the schoolroom, and from books.

Early Changes in the Vocabulary

When colonists settle in a new country they find the resources of their language constantly taxed. They have no words for the many new objects on every hand or the constant succession of new experiences that they undergo. Accordingly in a colonial language changes of vocabulary take place almost from the moment the first settlers arrive. When the colonists from England became acquainted with the physical features of this continent they seem to have been impressed particularly by its mountains

and forests, so much larger and more impressive than any in England, and the result was a whole series of new words like *bluff, foothill, notch, gap, divide, watershed, clearing, and underbrush*. Then there were the many living and growing things that were peculiar to the New World. The names for some of these the colonists learned from Native Americans, words like *moose, raccoon, skunk, opossum, chipmunk, porgy, terrapin*; others they formed by a descriptive process long familiar in the language: *mud hen, garter snake, bullfrog, potato bug, groundhog, reed bird*. Tree names such as the *hickory* and *live oak*, and the *locust* are new to colonial English, as are *sweet potato, eggplant, squash, persimmon, pecan*.

The individual character of our political and administrative system required the introduction of words such as *congressional, presidential, gubernatorial, congressman, caucus, mass meeting, selectman, statehouse, land office*. Many other words illustrate things associated with the new mode of life — *back country, backwoodsman, squatter, prairie, log cabin, clapboard, corncrib, popcorn, hoe cake, cold snap, snow plow, bobsled, sleigh*.

More interesting, however, are the cases in which colonists applied an old word to a slightly different thing, as when they

gave the name of the English *robin* to a red-breasted thrush, applied the word *turkey* to a distinctive American bird, and transferred the word *corn* to an entirely new cereal. American speakers were perhaps at their best when inventing simple, homely words like *apple butter*, *sidewalk*, *lightning rod*, *spelling bee*, *crazy quilt*, *lowdown*, and *know-nothing*.

Noah Webster's Call for an American Language

The Declaration of Independence and the years during which the colonies were fighting to establish their freedom from England produced an important change in American psychology. An ardent, sometimes belligerent patriotism sprang up, and among many people it became the order of the day to demand an American civilization as distinctive from that of Europe as were the political and social ideals that were being established in the new world.

No one expressed this attitude more vigorously than Noah Webster (1758–1843). Webster accordingly set about compiling three elementary books on English, a spelling book, a grammar, and a reader. These he published in 1783, 1784, and 1785 under the high-sounding title *A Grammatical Institute of the English*

Language. In 1806 he brought out a small *Dictionary*, the prelude to his greatest work. This was *An American Dictionary of the English Language*, published in 1828 in two quarto volumes. In all of these works and in numerous smaller writings he was animated by a persistent purpose: to show that the English language in America was a distinctly American thing, developing along its own lines, and deserving to be considered from an independent, American point of view. A “national language,” he says, “is a band of national union. Every engine should be employed to render the people of this country *national*; to call their attachments home to their own country; and to inspire them with the pride of national character.”

Webster’s Influence on American Spelling

It is a matter of common observation that American spelling often differs in small ways from that customary in England. We write *honor, color*, and a score of words without the *u* of English *honour, colour*, etc. We sometimes employ one consonant where the English write two: *traveler* — *traveller, wagon* — *waggon*, etc. We write *er* instead of *re* in a number of words like *fiber, center, theater*. We prefer an *s* in words like *defense, offense*, and write *ax, plow, tire, story*, and *czar*, for *axe, plough, tyre, storey*,

and *tsar*. The differences often pass unnoticed, partly because a number of English spellings are still current in America, partly because some of the American innovations are now common in England, and in general because certain alternatives are permissible in both countries. Although some of the differences have grown up since Webster's day, the majority of the distinctively American spellings are due to his advocacy of them and the incorporation of them in his dictionary.

Webster's Influence on American Pronunciation

Though the influence is more difficult to prove, there can be no doubt that to Webster are to be attributed some of the characteristics of American pronunciation, especially its uniformity and the disposition to give fuller value to the unaccented syllables of words.

Differences in Pronunciation between American English and British English

The earliest changes in the English language in America, distinguishing it from the language of the mother country, were in the vocabulary. These have already been mentioned. From the

time when the early colonists came, however, divergence in pronunciation began gradually to develop. This has been due in part to changes that have occurred here but has resulted still more from the fact that the pronunciation of England has undergone further change and that a variety of southern English has come to be recognized as the English received standard. At the present time American pronunciation shows certain well-marked differences from English use.

Perhaps the most noticeable of these differences is in the vowel sound in such words as *fast, path, grass, dance, can't, half*. At the end of the eighteenth century southern England began to change from what is called a flat *a* to a broad *a* in these words, that is from a sound like the *a* in *man* to one like the *a* in *father*. The change affected words in which the vowel occurred before *f, sk, sp, st, ss, th,* and *n* followed by certain consonants. In parts of New England the same change took place, but in most other parts of the country the old sound was preserved, and *fast, path, etc.*, are pronounced with the vowel of *pan*. In some speakers there is a tendency to employ an intermediate vowel, halfway between the *a* of *pan* and *father*, but the “flat *a*” must be regarded as the typical American pronunciation.

Next to the retention of the flat *a*, the most noticeable difference between English and American pronunciation is in the treatment of the *r*. In the received pronunciation of England this sound has disappeared except before vowels. It is not heard when it occurs before another consonant or at the end of a word unless the next word begins with a vowel. In America, eastern New England and some of the South follow the English practice, but in the Middle States and the West the *r* is pronounced in all positions.

A distinction less apparent to the layman is the pronunciation of the *o* in such words as *not*, *lot*, *hot*, *top*. In England this is still an open *o* pronounced with the lips rounded, but in America except in parts of New England it has commonly lost its rounding and in most words has become a sound identical in quality with the *a* in *father*, only short.

There are other differences of less moment between English and American pronunciation, because they concern individual words or small groups of words. Thus in England *been* has the same sound as *bean* but in America is like *bin*. *Leisure* often has in America what is popularly called a long vowel but in England usually rhymes with *pleasure*. There, too, the last syllable of words like *fertile* and *sterile* rhymes with *aisle*. American

English has kept the common eighteenth-century pronunciation with a short vowel or a mere vocalic *l*.

A more important difference is the greater clearness with which Americans pronounce unaccented syllables. They do not say *secret'ry* or *necess'ry*. Bernard Shaw said he once recognized an American because he accented the third syllable of *necessary*, and the disposition to keep a secondary stress on one of the unaccented syllables of a long word is one of the consequences of our effort to pronounce all the syllables.

The American Dialects

At least six regional dialects in the eastern half of the country are prominent enough to warrant individual characterization, and three additional dialects of considerable importance extend over several regions:

1. *Eastern New England*

This includes the whole or parts of states that lie to the east of the Connecticut River in Massachusetts and Connecticut and east of the Green Mountains in Vermont. Although not all features of the

dialect are uniform in their distribution, we may recognize as characteristic the retention of a rounded vowel in words like *hot* and *top*, which the rest of the country has unrounded to a shortened form of the *a* in *father*; the use of the broad *a* in *fast*, *path*, *grass*, etc.; and, as we have seen, the loss of the *r* in *car*, *hard*, and the like except before vowels (*carry*, *Tory*). Boston is its focal area.

2. New York City

Although often considered a part of the Eastern New England dialect, the speech of New York City and adjacent counties is on the whole quite different. The occurrence of *r* has increased significantly since World War II, and its frequency among various groups of speakers has become a reliable indicator of social class. *Cot* and *caught* are phonemically contrasted because the *o* in words like *cot* and *top*, before voiceless stops, is almost always unrounded. The pronunciation of *curl* like *coil*, *third* as *thoid* is the characteristic most distinctive of New York City in the popular mind, although it should be added that among cultivated New Yorkers *curl* and *coil* are phonemically distinct.

3. *Upper North*

Western New England, upstate New York, and the basin of the Great Lakes share features of pronunciation that derive from the original settlement and the spread of the population westward through the water route of the lakes. Like the speech of eastern New England, the Upper North dialect distinguishes [o] in words like *mourning* and *hoarse* from in *morning* and *horse*. Also like the dialect of eastern New England and in contrast with the prevailing forms of the Pennsylvania settlement area, the Upper North has [ð] regularly in *with*, [s] in *grease* (verb) and *greasy*, and [u:] in *roots*.

Because the speech of the Upper North differs strikingly from that of eastern New England in its retention of postvocalic [r] and in the occurrence of the vowel [æ] in words like *ask*, it is necessary to separate these two Northern varieties, with a prominent boundary running in a northerly direction from the mouth of the Connecticut River to the Green Mountains of Vermont.

4. Lower North

Like the dialect of the Upper North, that of the Lower North preserves the *r* in all positions and has [æ] in *fast, ask, grass*, etc. Within the Lower North region one of the two major subareas is the Middle Atlantic, which includes the eastern third of Pennsylvania below the Northern-Midland line, the southern half of New Jersey, the northern half of Delaware, and the adjacent parts of Maryland. The speech of this subarea has the unrounded vowel in *forest* as well as in *hot*, the [ɛ] of egg in *care, Mary, merry*, and a merging of [o] and before [r] and *four* and *forty*.

5. Upper South

The *r* is sounded as in the Lower North, but [aɪ] is generally pronounced [aɛ].

6. Lower South

The dialect of the Lower South covers a large area, the old plantation country, and it would be unreasonable to expect uniformity in it. Important focal areas are the Virginia Piedmont and the low country near the coast of South Carolina. In many

districts it agrees with eastern New England in the loss of *r* finally and before consonants, as in *car* and *hard*, but tends to go even further and omit the *r* before a word beginning with a vowel, as in *far away* [fa:ə'we]. But it does not have the rounded vowel in words like *top* and *hot*, or the broad *a* in *grass* and *dance*. In the latter words it shows a preference for [æə, æɪ] aeɪ]. A distinctive feature of the Southern dialect is the treatment of the diphthong in *out*. Instead of the usual [au] the Southern speaker begins this diphthong with [æ] before voiced consonants and finally.

7. General American

General American was widely accepted as one of the three main dialects of American English, along with New England and Southern. It was usually said to be characterized by the flat *a* (in *fast*, *path*, etc.), the unrounded vowel in *hot*, *top*, etc., the retention of a strong *r* in all positions, and less tendency than British English to introduce a glide after the vowels [e] and [o], *late*, *note*.

8. African American Vernacular English

One of the most intensively studied varieties of English during the past three decades has been the speech of many African Americans in the South and in northern cities. The very name of this variety, *African American Vernacular English* or *Vernacular Black English*, indicates both that the variety is not a geographical dialect and also that it is not the dialect of all African Americans. The term *vernacular* refers to nonstandard features of the variety, just as nonstandard features of English spoken mainly by whites have brought about the use of *White Vernacular*.

The best known example of an English-based creole in the continental United States is the Gullah dialect spoken by blacks along the coast and on the coastal islands of South Carolina and Georgia.

9. Hispanic American English

Like African American Vernacular English, Hispanic American English is a social and ethnic variety, but like the Anglo dialects of the Southwest it is also a geographical variety for which

isoglosses can be traced across the map. Indeed, some of the roots of its geography reach back further than those of any other variety of American English, to the late sixteenth century and for more than two centuries afterwards, when Texas was a part of Mexico. Hispanic American English is unique among the major varieties of English in being the result of languages in continuing contact within a bilingual culture, and yet the complexity of the linguistic situation is such that some scholars have questioned whether it is a dialect at all. The alternative would be to consider the features associated with Hispanic American English the result of language contact with Spanish and thus the manifestations of English learned as a second language, rather than the features of a stable dialect.

Whereas speakers of other varieties of English might modulate the degree of regionalism or ethnicity by changing the proportions of certain variable structures of English, speakers of Chicano English who also know Spanish might shift out of English altogether within a single sentence. This *code-switching* between English and Spanish is a familiar feature of Chicano English.

Present Differentiation of Vocabulary

Except in pronunciation the distance that the English language in America has traveled in its separation from that of England is chiefly measured in its vocabulary. It is easy to exaggerate the importance of the differences that can be readily pointed out. The American on going to England or the British traveler on arriving in America is likely to be impressed by them, because each finds the other's expressions amusing when they do not actually cause puzzlement. As examples of such differences the words connected with the railroad and the automobile are often cited. The British word for *railroad* is *railway*, the *engineer* is a *driver*, the *conductor* a *guard*. The *baggage car* is a *van*, and the *baggage* carried is always *luggage*. American *freight train* and *freight yard* become in Britain *goods train* and *goods yard*. Some of the more technical terms are likewise different. A *sleeper* in the United States is a sleeping car; in Britain it is what Americans call a *tie*. American *switch* is a *point*, a *grade crossing* a *level crossing*, and so on. In connection with the automobile, the British speak of a *lorry* (truck), *windscreen* (windshield), *bonnet* (hood), *sparking plugs*, *gear lever* (gearshift), *gearbox* (transmission), *silencer* (muffler), *boot* (trunk), *petrol* (gasoline or gas). British *motorway* is American *expressway* and *dual*

carriageway is *divided highway*. Such differences can be found in almost any part of the vocabulary: *lift* (elevator), *post* (mail), *hoarding* (billboard), *nappy* (diaper), *spanner* (wrench), *underground* (subway), *cotton wool* (absorbent cotton), *barrister* (lawyer), *dustman* (garbage collector). Americans readily recognize the American character of *ice cream soda*, *apple pie*, *popcorn*, *free lunch*, *saloon* from their associations, and can understand why some of them would not be understood elsewhere. A writer in the London *Daily Mail* complained that an English person would find “positively incomprehensible” the American words *commuter*, *rare* (as applied to underdone meat), *intern*, *tuxedo*, *truck farming*, *realtor*, *mean* (nasty), *dumb* (stupid), *enlisted man*, *seafood*, *living room*, *dirt road*, and *mortician*, although some of these have since become normal in British English. It is always unsafe to say what American words a British person will not understand, and there are some pairs in this list that would be pretty generally “comprehended” on both sides of the Atlantic. Some words have a deceptive familiarity. *Lumber* with Americans is timber but in Britain is discarded furniture and the like. *Laundry* in America is not only the place where clothing and linen are washed but the articles themselves. A *lobbyist* in England is a parliamentary reporter, not one who

attempts to influence the legislative process, and a *pressman* for Americans is not a reporter but one who works in the pressroom where a newspaper is printed.

CHAPTER SEVEN

ENGLISH IN THE SCIENTIFIC AGE

By about 1700, the main changes in pronunciation that made up the Great Vowel Shift were all completed. Forms like ‘loveth’ had disappeared in ordinary educated speech, and been replaced by ones like ‘loves’. The pronouns ‘thou and thee’, and the corresponding verb forms like ‘truest’, had disappeared from everyday educated use. Auxiliary ‘do’ had come to be used as we use it today. And, all in all, the language had reached a stage at which its differences from present-day English were very small. This can be seen if we look at a piece of writing from the early eighteenth century. The following is an extract from one of the numbers of the Spectator for the year 1711; it was written by Joseph Addison, who was fond of ridiculing the Italian opera, which was then in vogue in London:

“The next Step to our Refinement, was the introducing of Italian Actors into our Opera; who sung their Parts in their own Language, at the same Time that our Countrymen perform’d theirs in our native Tongue. The Ring or Hero of the Play generally spoke in Italian, and his Slaves answered him in English: The Lover frequently made his Court, and gained the

Heart of his Princess in a Language which she did not understand. One would have thought it very difficult to have carry'd on Dialogues after this Manner, without an Interpreter between the Persons that convers'd together; but this was the State of the English Stage for about three Years.

At length the Audience grew tir'd of understanding Half the Opera, and therefore to ease themselves Entirely of the Fatigue Of Thinking, have so order'd it at Present that the whole Opera is perform'd in an unknown Tongue, we no longer understand the Language of our own stage insomuch that I have often been afraid, when I have seen our Italian ' Performers chattering in the Vehemence of Action, that they have been calling us Names, and abusing us among themselves; but I hope, since we do put such an entire Confidence in them, they will not talk against us before our Faces, though they may do it with the same Safety as if it were behind our Backs. In the mean Time I cannot forbear thinking how naturally an Historian, who writes Two or Three hundred Years hence, and does not know the Taste of his wise Forefathers, will make the following Reflection, *In the Beginning of the Eighteenth Century, the Italian Tongue was so well understood in England, that Operas were acted on the publick Stage in that Language.*

If we feel that that piece of writing is very typical of its age, this is largely a matter of tone and style and outlook; there is very little in grammar, syntax, or vocabulary that would not be acceptable in present-day English. Addison writes ‘sung’ where we use ‘sang’ (though ‘sung’ is common in substandard speech, and may yet come back into the literary language). We should perhaps write ‘At’ instead of ‘In’ at one point (‘In the Beginning of the Eighteenth Century’). And there is one example of ‘do’ used in an older way (“since we do put’), though this may possibly be an example of the emphatic use.

THE STANDARDIZATION OF SPELLING

Addison’s spelling, too, is almost identical with ours. There are minor differences, like carry’d and publick, and there are small differences in punctuation and in the use of capital letters; but essentially the system of orthography is the one we use now. In Middle and early Modern English there had been no standard spelling: it varied from writer to writer, and even within the work of one writer. Even proper names were not fixed and Shakespeare, in the three signatures on his will, uses two

different spellings of his own surname (Shakspere and Shakespeare).

A powerful force for standardization was the introduction of printing, and by the middle of the sixteenth century, although there was still no standard system, there were quite a number of widely accepted conventions. There was considerable discussion of the problem by grammarians and spelling reformers in both the sixteenth and the seventeenth century, partly because of the increased interest in the vernacular, and partly because people with a classical education wanted English to be 'fixed' in the way that classical Latin was fixed. This classical desire for a stable language was even stronger in the eighteenth century, a great age for grammarians and lexicographers, among whom the most famous is Dr Johnson. But in fact the standardization of English spelling had effectively taken place before that century opened, in the second half of the seventeenth century; and it has changed only in minor ways since that time.

However, the standardized spelling which became established in the late seventeenth century was already an archaic one, and broadly speaking it represented the pronunciation of English as it had been in late medieval times.

This explains many of the oddities of present-day English spelling. We still preserve letters in our spelling which represent sounds that long ago ceased to be pronounced, like the *k* and *gh* of *knight*, the *t* in *castle*, the *w* in *wrong*. In some cases a sound change has taken place, but the spelling represents the older pronunciation, as in *clerk* and *Derby* (which would more reasonably be spelt *clark* and *Darby*). Distinctions are made in spelling where there is no longer any distinction in pronunciation, as in *meat* and *sea* beside *meet* and *see*.

Conversely, new distinctions have arisen without being recognized in the spelling, so that we use the same letter to represent the vowels of *put* and *putt*. Diphthongs, like the vowel of *mice*, are often represented by a single letter, because the sound was a pure vowel in Middle English. And, conversely, modern monophthongs are sometimes represented by digraphs, like the *au* of *author* or the *ou* of *cough*, because in Middle English the sound was a diphthong. And superimposed on all this are the effects of Renaissance etymologizing, which accounts for such things as the *b* in *Subtle* and the *p* in *receipt*. Such things have introduced inconsistencies into our spelling, and these are what is bad about it; within quite wide limits, the spelling

conventions that a language adopts are a matter of indifference, but it is important that it should use them consistently.

One result of the inconsistencies of our spelling is the prevalence of spelling pronunciations. These arise when a word is given a new pronunciation through the influence of its spelling. This is especially likely to happen when universal education and the wide dissemination of books and newspapers introduce people to words in printed form which they have never heard pronounced in their home environment. Spelling pronunciations are also encouraged by the commonly held view that the written form of a word is the primary or 'right' one, to which the spoken form should be made to conform. This attitude was long strengthened by the predominance in English education of classical studies, centered upon the written texts of two dead languages.

The prestige accorded to the written forms explains the fact that even ordinary everyday words may be given spelling pronunciations. Thus, the influence of the spelling leads many people to pronounce the t in often and waistcoat, the th in clothes, the h in forehead, the l in Ralph, and the w in towards. These had been lost in the traditional pronunciation, which would be better represented by the spellings offen, weskit, cloze, forrid,

Rafe, and tords; in all six of these words, with the sole exception of forehead, the spelling pronunciation is now fully accepted in educated speech.

CHANGES IN PRONUNCIATION

In pronunciation no major changes have taken place since Addison's time, but there have been a number of minor ones. Perhaps the most important has been the disappearance of r before consonants and before a pause. Formerly, the r was always pronounced in words like barn and person and father. But today, in southeastern English and also in some kinds of American speech, the r is never pronounced in words like barn and person, and is pronounced in words like father only if they occur immediately before a vowel (as in the phrase 'father and mother'). The weakening of r before consonants and before a pause had begun in the sixteenth century or even earlier, but the final disappearance of the r in educated speech did not take place until the middle of the eighteenth century.

However, although r has disappeared from such positions, it has left its mark on the words where it was formerly pronounced, for, before disappearing, it caused changes in the vowel that preceded

it. In Middle English, arm was pronounced [arm], birch was [birtʃ], and here was [he:r]; whereas today the three words are pronounced [a:m], [bɜ:tʃ], and [hiə]. The r has caused three kinds of change: lengthening, change of quality, and diphthongization. The changes mostly occur in early Modern English, but one of them goes back to Middle English times, and some were not completed until the eighteenth century.

Examples of the lengthening process are arm, bark, card, and cord, horse, storm. These originally had short [a] and [ɔ], which were lengthened in the seventeenth century. The lengthened [a] has developed into the /a:/ phoneme of present-day English, a phoneme that did not exist in early Modern English. The lengthened [ɔ] has become the present-day English phoneme /ɔ:/, and has fallen together with the vowel of words like came and law, which in Middle English was the diphthong [au] and which became a pure vowel in the course of early Modern English.

An example of change of quality is the development of [er] to [ar]. This took place in late Middle English, and affected many words, though not all. So Middle English *sterre*, *ferre*, and *ferme* became early Modern English *star*, *far*, and *farm*; then the ‘a’ was

lengthened in the seventeenth century, and the r lost in the eighteenth, giving our present-day pronunciation. In words in which [er] failed to develop into [ar], like certain and verse, it developed in the sixteenth century into [ər]; in the seventeenth century the [ə] was lengthened to [ə:], and in the eighteenth century the [r] was lost, giving the present-day pronunciations [sə:tən] and [və:s] (though [er] can still be heard in Scots speech). In a few words, double forms were preserved, one with er and one with ar; such doublets include person and parson, university and varsity, errant and arrant, perilous and parlous.

The process of diphthongization before r took place in the long vowels. In Middle English, care was pronounced [ka:r], and deer was [de:r]. By 1600, these had quite regularly become [ke:r] and [di:r], by the Great Vowel Shift. But in the seventeenth century the [r] caused diphthongization and they became [ker] and [diar]; the eighteenth-century loss of final [r] has given the present-day pronunciations [keə] and [diə]. Similar changes have produced the diphthongs in poor, flour, scarce, and pear.

Various other dependent changes have taken place in Modern English, though none as far-reaching in their effects as those caused by r. For example, after w there has been a change of a to

o, so that swan and watch no longer have the same vowel as ran and match. This change began in the seventeenth century and was completed in the eighteenth; it did not take place, however, when the 'a' was followed by a velar consonant, as in wax, wagon, and twang. Another change has been the lengthening of short a and o before the voiceless fricatives [f], [s] and [θ], as in after, castle, bath, often, moss, cloth. These lengthenings took place in the seventeenth century, and became fashionable in the eighteenth, but forms with short vowels have continued to exist beside them in some styles of speech. The short a is normal in the north of England, for example. And in the 20th century the forms with lengthened o (pronounced [ɔ:]) had been dropping out of use in the standard language, the forms ' with short o being used instead: so that it now sounds rather old-fashioned to use a long vowel in words like often and moss.

Shortening of vowels has taken place in the modern period in numerous words, especially words of one syllable. You can often recognize such shortenings from the spelling, which shows that the word had a long vowel in Middle English, for example book, foot, dead, sweat, sieve, Greenwich. In the proverbial phrase 'to lose (or spoil) the ship for a ha'porth of tar', ' the word ship is a shortening of sheep.

THE INFLUENCE OF SCIENTIFIC WRITING

The seventeenth century saw the triumph of the scientific outlook in England, and science has had a pervasive influence on the language and the way it has been used during the past three hundred years. We have already seen how Latin gave way to English as the language of science and scholarship. The rise of scientific writing in English helped to establish a simple referential kind of prose as the central kind in Modern English.

Other kinds of prose continued to exist, of course, but a rhetorical style ceased to be the norm, and what we may call 'the plain style' became central, the background against which other kinds of prose were examined. The plain style is not of course confined to science; it is found in all kinds of expository writing - history, philosophy, literary criticism, and so on. Nor, unfortunately, do all scientists write in a plain style. But scientific writing, and the scientific attitude in general, undoubtedly played a part in the establishment of this style.

In the second half of the seventeenth century, the influence of science on the way language was used was quite conscious. In 1667 Thomas Sprat wrote a history of the Royal Society, the first

scientific society in England, and still the most famous. In this book, he made an attack in rhetorical and figurative language, which he said the members of the Royal Society had rejected:

“They have therefore been most rigorous in putting in execution, the only Remedy that can be found for this extravagance: and that has been, a constant Resolution, to reject all the amplifications, digressions, and swellings of style: to return back to the primitive purity, and shortness, when men delivered so many things, almost in an equal number of words. They have exacted from all their members, a close, naked, natural way of speaking; positive expressions; dear senses; a native easiness; bringing all things as near the mathematical plainness, as they can: and preferring the language of Artizans, Countrymen, and Merchants, before that of Wits, or Scholars.”

Sprat’s primitive purity and shortness is of course a myth: the kind of style he is describing is a highly sophisticated achievement, and not at all primitive. But the passage shows clearly that the seventeenth-century scientists had their own ideas about the way language should be used.

THE SCIENTIFIC VOCABULARY

However, the more obvious influence of science on the language has been in the expansion of the scientific vocabulary. Scientists have needed technical terms for an enormous number of things: for example, for the names of the branches and sub-branches of science (zoology, chemistry, histology, genetics); for newly discovered or invented substances (oxygen, uranium, benzene, nucleic acid, nylon); for the various parts of an organism (femur, flagellum, pericarp); for the various kinds of plant and animal (*Angelica sylvestris*, *Calidris ferruginea*, *Homo sapiens*); for various kinds of scientific instrument (barometer, electroscope, vernier, cyclotron); for units of measurement (metre, micron, dyne, erg, ohm); for states and processes and relationships (anaesthesia, photosynthesis, symbiosis); for the description of shapes and qualities (ovate, glabrous); for postulated entities (phlogiston, luminiferous ether, neutrino); and in general for an enormous number of objects and concepts of all kinds.

One authority has estimated that the technical vocabulary of the natural sciences now runs into several millions of items. Nobody, obviously, can know more than a fraction of this vocabulary: the greater part of it must belong to the narrowly specialist field.

However, there is a considerable scientific vocabulary which is more widely known, and some of the very common words are familiar to the man in the street ‘ (like cell, atom, nucleus, volt, molecule).

In forming this enormous vocabulary, the scientists have drawn on various sources. One device is to take a word already in everyday use and give it a special scientific meaning. This is what the chemists have done with salt, the botanists with pollen and fruit, the biologists with parasite, the metallurgists with fatigue, and the physicists with work, force, power, current, and resistance. Another way is to take over words bodily from another language; thus from Latin have been taken such words as bacillus, corolla, cortex, focus, genus, quantum, saliva, and stamen; fewer words have been lifted from Greek, but there are some, like cotyledon, iris, larynx, pyrites, and thorax.

But by far the commonest way of providing new scientific words is to invent them, using Greek and Latin material. Thus there is no Greek word chlorophyll, but the English word is made up of Greek elements chloros (‘light green’) and phyllon (‘leaf’); the whole word does not of course mean ‘light green leaf’, but is the name for the substance in plants that gives them their green

color. Similarly, there is no Latin word vitamin, but this word has been coined from Latin elements, of which the main one is vita ('life'). Some words are mixed Latin and Greek, for example haemoglobin; this is the name of a protein substance in the blood, and is built up from a Greek word for 'blood', a Latin word for 'ball', and a suffix -in which could be equally well Greek or Latin.

The number of such words formed from classical elements, and especially Greek ones, is now enormous. It is sometimes objected to them that they are opaque, i.e. that their meaning is not self-evident to an Englishman in the way that a word formed from English elements might be. There were some folksy reformers in the nineteenth century who wanted to replace such classical coinages by English ones: electricity, for example, could be called fireghost, and the horizon would be called tile sky-sill. Such arguments have had no effect, however; and the classical words have the advantage of being intelligible internationally.

Moreover, in any specialist field, the research worker presumably gets to know the meanings of the classical element commonly used there, so that the words are not opaque to him. Indeed, there are Greek elements that are so commonly used in forming

English words that their meaning is understood by most educated Englishmen, even if they know no Greek. Such, for example, are elements like metro ('single'), pyro ('fire'), bio ('life'), graph ('write, draw'), photo ('light'), phono ('speech, sound'), morph ('shape, form'), hydro ('water'), thermo ('heat'), micro ('small'), and many more.

The great expansion of the scientific vocabulary during the last three hundred years has gone on at an ever-increasing pace. The sixteenth century had introduced especially words to do with the human body, like skeleton, tibia, abdomen, and tendon, and also a number of names of diseases, like catarrh, epilepsy, mumps, and smallpox. In the seventeenth century, too, the new scientific words were predominantly medical and biological (vertebra, tonsil, pneumonia, lumbago); but there were also quite a few new words in chemistry (including acid), in physics (including atmosphere, equilibrium, and gravity), and in mathematics (including formula, logarithm, and series).

In the eighteenth century came an enormous expansion in the vocabulary of the biological sciences, for this was the great age of biological description and classification, as seen for example in the work of Linnaeus. From this period, therefore, come many

of the descriptive terms of zoology and botany, like albino, coleoptera, anther, fauna, dicotyledon, habitat, pistil, and so on.

The great changes in chemical theory in the late eighteenth century also produced many new words, including hydrogen, oxygen, nitrogen, and molecule. In the nineteenth century, the expansion became explosive; many specialized scientific fields were developing rapidly, and the majority of the new words have never had any circulation outside their own narrow sphere. A few, however, have got into common use, like accumulator, dynamo, cereal, hibernate, pasteurize, conifer, ozone, metabolism, and aspidistra.

In the 20th century, the flow continued, especially in the newer fields like genetics and nuclear physics. Once again, a certain number of the new words got into the language of the non-specialist. Nuclear physics, for example, has had a profound effect on us all, both in changing our conceptions of the universe and in confronting us with new and terrifying problems of war and human survival, and we all know words like proton, neutron, electron, reactor, radioactive, and isotope. This last word is especially connected in the popular mind with the medical applications of radioactive isotopes; and other new words that

bear closely on our health have also obtained a wide circulation: vitamin, penicillin, antibiotic.

Other words have obtained general currency because they are connected with new and widely used products of technology: stratosphere and supersonic are linked in our minds with airliners, and we all know about nylon, television, and transistors, because they are popular consumer goods. Some scientific words get taken into popular speech and used with a quite different meaning; this has happened, for example, with atomic (often used popularly to mean ‘powerful, shattering’) and with allergic (a word now commonly used to indicate disinclination or dislike).

THE EXPANSION OF THE GENERAL VOCABULARY

The expansion of the English vocabulary in the modern period has by no means been confined to scientific words. As a community changes, there is a constant demand for new words to express new concepts or new attitudes, to denote new objects or institutions, and so on. During the past few centuries the change has been particularly great and society has become increasingly complex. And the growth of our vocabulary has been

correspondingly great. New methods develop in commerce, and bring new words with them: capital, discount, insurance, finance, and budget. New ideas and new institutions demand a new political vocabulary: legislator, cabinet, prime minister, democrat; socialism. New configurations of human experience emerge in the arts, and new words crystallize round them: sentimental, romantic, aesthete, expressionist. Even new recreations and pastimes produce new words, like jazz and aqualung, and so do new fashions, whether it be doublet, crinoline, jeans, or bikini. And so on.

The flood of new words in Modern English has had various sources. We have seen that most of the new scientific words are learned formations using classical elements, but this has not been the main way of acquiring new words in other spheres.

Loan Words

We have continued to borrow words from other languages. Because of the growth of world trade, and Britain's large part in it, we have borrowed words from distant and exotic countries: pyjamas from India, bamboo from Malaya, maize from the West Indies, budgerigar from Australia, tomato from Mexico, coffee

from Turkey, and tea from China. And many more. Nearer home, we have continued to borrow words from French words connected with the arts (critique, connoisseur, pointillism), with clothes and fashion (rouge, corduroy, suede), with social life (etiquette, parvenu, elite), and more recently with motoring and aviation (garage, hangar, chauffeur, fuselage, nacelle).

From the Dutch we have taken more nautical terms (taffrail, schooner), and from the Italians more words from the arts (studio, replica, scenario, fiasco). From German have come quite a few scientific words, especially in chemistry and mineralogy, like paraffin, cobalt, and quartz; the Germans have also given us a few words in wartime, like strafe, blitz, and ersatz. From other languages we borrow words occasionally when there is some special reason like Afrikaans apartheid and Russian sputnik.

Altogether, loan words have continued to make a very respectable contribution to our vocabulary throughout the late Modern English period. But they cannot compare in number with the flood of French words in Middle English or of Latin words in the Renaissance. And in fact there have been other sources of new words which have been more important.

Affixation

An important method has been the use of prefixes and suffixes, which are added to existing English words or stems to form new words. Thus the prefix un- can be added to enormous numbers of words to give words like unlucky, unconditional, untie, unfunny, and so on. The prefix de- can be added to verbs to give forms like denationalize, decontrol, and deration, or can replace another prefix, as when demote is coined as the opposite of promote. And similarly with many other prefixes, like dis-, pre-, anti-, pro-, mis-.

An example of a suffix is -ize, which can be added to adjectives (national, miniature, tender) or to nouns (carbon, vitamin, vapour) to form new verbs (nationalize, carbonize, etc.). From these in turn can be formed a new abstract noun ending in -ization (like nationalization, carbonization). Other active suffixes in Modern English include -er (walker, bumper), -ee (detainee, employee, evacuee), -st (anarchist, capitalist, stockist) and -y or -ie (civvy, goalie, nappy, undies).

Most of these prefixes and suffixes are not of native origin, i.e. they have not come down to us from Old English but have been

taken over from Greek, Latin, or French. This of course is of no importance - they have now become part of the English language and their origins are irrelevant. Many of them are in fact so familiar to us that we can use them for making spontaneous coinages in speech or writing ('anti-Common-Market', 'pre-Stalin', 're-transcribe', and such like).

Compounding

Another method of word formation that has been very prolific in the modern period is compounding, that is, the making of a new word by joining together two existing ones. In this way we have obtained such words as airscrew, bandmaster, childlike, graveyard, nosedive, oatcake, offside, oilcloth, outcry, pigtail, and so on. Some words are particularly prolific in forming new compounds: there are large numbers ending in man (like postman, frogman, business-man), and in present-day American English there are large number of new adverbs ending in -wise (like examinationwise, discussionwise, and so on). We tend to treat such compounds as single words (a) if their meaning cannot be deduced from the sum of their parts, as in the case of air-umbrella and bubble-car, or (b) if they have the stress pattern of a single word, as in the case of paperback and redbrick. The

importance of stress, and of the accompanying intonation pattern, can be seen if you compare a blackbird with a black bird, or the greenhouse with the green house.

When a compound word has become established, it may then in the course of time undergo phonetic changes which make it quite different from the words that originally made it up. The unstressed element is especially likely to change. For example, nobleman is an old compound word (going back to Middle English), and its second element no longer has the same vowel as the independent word man, but has been weakened down to [-man] (at any rate in the southeast of England).

Sometimes the pronunciation of both elements diverges from that of their originals: breakfast is derived from break and fast, but no longer has the vowel of either. Other similar example (all going back to the Middle English period or earlier) are sheriff ('shire reeve'), holiday ('holy day'), woman ('wife man'), two-pence, and garlic ('gore leek', where the first element originally meant 'spear', and survives in dressmaking in the sense of 'gusset'). There are also cases where only the stressed element has diverged in pronunciation from its original, like tadpole ('toad poll', i.e. 'toad head'). Many of these vowel changes represent a

shortening of the vowel at some period, either because it was unstressed (as in the -lic of garlic), or because it occurred before a group of consonants (tadpole), or because it occurred in the first syllable of a three-syllable word (holiday).

When such changes of pronunciation have taken place, a word-element with the new pronunciation may itself be used for making new compounds. Thus in southeastern English the ending [-man] (from words like nobleman) has been used to form new words like postman and frogman, in which the ending has never had the same pronunciation as the independent word 'man'. In some cases, the pronunciation of such an element can change so much that it is no longer recognized as identical with the original word. An example is the ending -ly, in adjectives like lonely, kingly, bodily. This goes back to an Old English ending -lie, which originally was identical with the Old English independent word *līc*, meaning 'form, shape, body'. This survives in the word *lychgate*, so called because it was the roofed gate leading into the churchyard under which the body was placed while the funeral procession awaited the arrival of the clergyman.

Moreover, our preposition 'like' ('similar to') goes back to the Old English adjective 'gelīc' ('similar, equal'), which was

derived from *līc* and basically meant something like ‘having the same form as’. But phonetic change has obscured for us the relationship between *-ly*, *lych*, and *like*, which originally were all the same word. And now we think of *-ly* as a suffix, not as the second half of a compound word. It is in fact an example of the way in which a suffix can develop out of a full word. Now that we no longer feel any relationship between *-ly* and *like*, we can use the latter for forming a new series of compound words. So beside the word *lively*, which goes back to Old English *līflīc*, we have the more recent formation *lifelike*, which consists of what are, historically speaking, exactly the same two elements.

Conversion

A process which has led to quite a considerable expansion of the vocabulary, in both Middle and Modern English, is the one called ‘conversion’. This is the transfer of a word from one grammatical category to another, for example from noun to verb, or from adjective to noun. The word ‘market’, borrowed from Norman French in the eleventh century, was originally used only as a noun, as when we say ‘a market is held here every Saturday’. But since the seventeenth century we have also been able to use the word *market* as a verb, as when we say ‘this detergent is

marketed by I.C.I.'. This kind of change is very easy in Modern English, because of the loss of so many of our inflexions. There is nothing in the word 'market', taken in isolation, to show what part of speech it is, whereas the Latin mercatus (from which it is ultimately derived) shows immediately by its ending that it is not a verb.

In Old English, similarly, the ending of a word often proclaims what part of speech it is, and related words are formed by suffixes rather than by conversion. Thus there is an Old English noun 'dōm' and a related verb 'dēman' (from earlier *dōmjan); these became Modern English 'doom' and 'deem', but now we also have a verb 'to doom', formed by conversion from the noun, and recorded from the fifteenth century.

An example of a noun being formed from a verb is ambush; this was borrowed from the French in Middle English times, in the form to enbush or to embush, and is not found used as a noun until the late fifteenth century. The word black, on the other hand, was originally only an adjective (as in a black hat); later it came to be used also as a noun (to wear black) and as a verb (to black boots).

The process of conversion is especially popular in the present century. There are new verbs like to feature, to film, to pinpoint, to headline, to process, to service, to audition, to garage. New nouns include a highup and a must. And perhaps we could say that there are new adjectives like key ('a key man'), teenage, backroom, off-the-record, and round-the-clock. But it is in fact debatable whether these should be called adjectives, because they cannot be used in all positions which adjectives can normally occupy in the sentence: we can say that a man is very important, but not that he is very key. One particularly common type in recent years has been the compound noun formed by conversion from a corresponding verb: from the verb to hand out is formed the new noun a handout, and similarly with buildup, walkout, setup, blackout, hairdo, and knowhow. In these cases the verb usually has double stress (to hand out) and the noun single stress (a handout).

Minor Sources of New Words

We have now covered the major sources of the great expansion of the vocabulary in the modern period, but there are also a number of minor ways in which new words have been acquired, and we can look at a few of these. One is the process of

shortening. Most often, this is done by cutting off the end of the word, as when cabriolet becomes cab, or photograph becomes photo. Sometimes it is the end of a whole phrase that is cut off, as when public house becomes pub or permanent wave becomes perm. And occasionally it is the beginning of the word that is lopped off, as when acute becomes cute, or periwig just trig. Other examples of shortening are bus (omnibus), van (caravan, vanguard), telly (television), nylons (nylon stockings), prefab (prefabricated house), plane (aeroplane), and bra (brassiere).

A few new words are made by blending, that is by combining part of one word with part of another: brunch (breakfast and lunch), motel (motor hotel), subtopia (suburban utopia), smog (smoke and fog).

Another minor source of words is illustrated by 'ohm' and 'bikini': the first is taken from the name of the German scientist G. S. Ohm, and the second from the name of a Pacific atoll which was used for atomic bomb tests. Sometimes such proper names are combined with a suffix, as in the verb to pasteurize; sometime a pet name is taken, as in bobby ('policeman'), from Sir Robert Peel. But often the name of a person or place is taken unchanged and used as the name for something: mackintosh,

cardigan, derrick (from the name of a seventeenth century hangman), doily, diesel, sandwich (from the fourth Earl of Sandwich, who was unwilling to leave the gambling table even to eat). Similarly, a few proprietary trade names have been made 140 common nouns, like thermos (flask) and primus (stove).

Yet another minor method of word-formation is that called back formation. An example of this is the verb to sidle, which was formed in the seventeenth century from the adverb sideling. The word sideling (a variant of sidelong) meant 'sideways, obliquely'; but in a sentence like 'He came sideling down the road' it could obviously be apprehended as the present participle of a (non-existent) verb to sidle; and as a consequence this verb was then invented.

Similarly, the verb to beg was probably a back formation from the noun beggar, itself derived from the French word begard. In this case, the -ar of beggar has been 'identified with the -er ending by which agent nouns are formed from verbs (rob/robber, drink/drinker, etc.), and the verb to beg then invented by analogy with such forms. More recent examples of back formation are the nineteenth-century verbs to enthuse and to reminisce (from enthusiasm and reminiscence). Perhaps we should also count as

back formations, verbs like to baby-sit, to bird-watch, to mass-produce, which are probably derived from the compound nouns baby-sitter, bird-watcher, mass production; this particular type of formation is quite common in our own time.

CHAPTER EIGHT

ENGLISH AS A WORLD LANGUAGE

Today, when English is one of the major languages of the world, it requires an effort of the imagination to realize that this is a relatively recent thing - that Shakespeare, for example, wrote for a speech community of only a few millions, whose language was not thought to be of much account by the other nations of Europe, and was unknown to the rest of the world. Shakespeare's language was confined to England and southern Scotland, not having yet penetrated very much into Ireland or even into Wales, let alone into the world beyond.

In the first place, the great expansion in the number of English speakers was due to the growth of population in England itself. At the Norman Conquest, the population of England was perhaps a million and a half. During the Middle Ages it grew to perhaps, four or five million, but then was held down by recurrent plagues, and was still under five million in 1600. It was approaching six million in 1700, and nine million in 1800, and then expanded rapidly to seventeen million in 1850 and over thirty million in 1900.

At the same time, English penetrated more and more into the rest of the British Isles at the expense of the Celtic languages. But the populations of other European countries were expanding too, and even in the eighteenth century, when England was beginning to be powerful and influential in the world, the English language still lacked the prestige in Europe of French and Italian. And it was not until the nineteenth century that it became widely respected as a language of culture, commerce, and international communication.

However, English has become a world language because of its establishment as a mother tongue outside England, in all the continents of the world. This carrying of English to other parts of the world began in the seventeenth century, with the first settlements in North America, and continued with increasing impetus through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Above all, it is the great growth of population in the United States, assisted by massive immigration in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, that has given the English language its present standing in the world. In 1788, when the first American census was held, there were about four million people in the United States, most of them of British origin. By 1830, the

population was nearly thirteen million; by 1850 it was twenty-three million, and had overtaken that of England; and then it shot ahead to fifty million by 1880, seventy-six million by 1900, and a hundred and fifty million by 1950. At the same time there was a less grandiose but nevertheless important expansion of native speakers of English elsewhere in the world, so that today there are about fifteen million in Canada, twelve million in Australia, nearly three million in New Zealand, and over a million in South Africa.

There are very few native speakers of English in South America or in Asia, but English is an important medium of communication in many parts of the world where it is not a native language. In India, with its five hundred million people and its two hundred and twenty-five different languages, English is still the main medium of communication between educated speakers from different parts of the country, and is widely used as a language of administration and commerce. As could be expected, the Indian schools have changed over to teaching in the regional languages since Independence, but English is still used as the medium of instruction in most Indian universities, and university students rely to a very large extent on textbooks written in English.

A similar situation is found in other countries, especially former British colonies: in Nigeria, for example, where there are three main regions with different languages, English is still an essential language for internal communication, and the universities carry out their teaching in English. This situation cannot continue forever; such countries will ultimately change over to teaching and administering and publishing textbooks in one or more of their own languages, and nobody will want to quarrel with them for that. But it is clear that for a long time ahead English will be an important language for them, playing a role somewhat like that of Latin in medieval Europe.

Moreover, the use of English as a medium of international communication is not confined to such countries. In the past few hundred years the English-speaking peoples have played a large part in seafaring and international trade, and English has become one of the essential commercial languages of the world. So that if a Norwegian or Dutch business firm wants to write to a firm in Japan or Brazil or Ceylon, it will probably do so in English, and will expect to receive a reply in English. In science, too, the English-speaking peoples have played a large part, and in recent years there has been an increasing tendency for scientists in other

countries to publish in English, which in this field has gained at the expense of German.

Of course, English is not the only important international language. Arabic, French, German, Malay, and Spanish all play an important part in certain areas. Russian has become of greater international importance than ever before, and will undoubtedly continue to go up; and we can confidently expect that Chinese will soon follow. But at the moment it does seem that English is the most important of the international languages.

DIVERGENT DEVELOPMENT IN MODERN ENGLISH

As new English-speaking communities have been set up in different parts of the world - North America, Australia, South Africa, and so on - a certain amount of divergent development has inevitably taken place in their languages. Fortunately, a standard form of English had already established itself pretty firmly in England before the expansion over the world began, otherwise the divergence might have been greater, and English might not have survived as a single language. Even so, it is clear that some of the groups that emigrated had social or regional peculiarities in their language which made it different right from

the start from the standard form of the language in England. This was probably the case, for example, with some of the groups that settled in North America in the seventeenth century: these tended to be drawn from the puritan middle classes, not from the landowning gentry whose language had the greatest prestige in England. Moreover, once the group was settled in its new home, far from the influence of the original speech community, its language took its own course. Changes in pronunciation took place; new words were coined to cope with the new environment; there was influence from other languages spoken in the region; and in general the community put the stamp of its own personality on the language.

AUSTRALIAN ENGLISH

So today there is, for example, a distinctively Australian form of English. It has its own pronunciation: for example, the long vowel in words like 'park' is made further forward than in Britain (British [pa:k], Australian [pa:k]); the /ə:/ phoneme (as in bird) is made in a higher position than in Britain, and is given some lip-rounding; and the unstressed endings -es and -ed (in words like boxes and waited) are not pronounced [-iz] and [-id], as in Britain, but [-əz] and [-əd].

There are also vocabulary items which are specifically Australian: words have been borrowed from local aboriginal languages, like dingo, billabong, and woomera; new words have been coined from existing English elements, like outback, tuckerbox and stockman; old words have been given new meanings, like wattle ('acacia'), bush ('woodland, rural areas'), and paddock (used for any piece of fenced land, whatever its size); and old dialect words which have been lost in England have been retained, ' like larrikin ('hooligan'), fossick ('to seek, rummage around'), and perhaps wowser ('fanatical puritan'). Characteristic Australian idioms and phrases have grown up, and Australian slang in particular has been enriched to the stage where it is incomprehensible to the outsider.

When local developments take place like this, they may then react back on the English spoken in Britain. The influence of the Commonwealth countries on British English has on the whole been limited to vocabulary, like Australian boomerang, kangaroo, bush telegraph, cuppa. But American influence has been more pervasive, and has increased considerably in recent years, because the Americans now form the largest, richest, and most powerful group within the English-speaking community.

AMERICAN ENGLISH

That British and American English have diverged in the three hundred odd years since the first settlements is obvious enough, and many of the differences are apparent to speakers on both sides of the Atlantic. There are differences in pronunciation, especially of the vowels, so that British and American speakers use different vowel sounds in words like home, hot, and aunt. There are differences of grammar, so that an American can say 'Do you have the time?' while an Englishman says 'Have you got the time?' And there are differences of vocabulary, so that every after-dinner speaker knows that British braces are American suspenders, while British suspenders are American garters.

Some of the divergences are due to the fact that British English has changed, while American has not: for example, the American pronunciation of words like fast and bath with [æ] is more archaic than the British pronunciation with [a:]. On the other hand, the American use of the word creek to mean 'tributary' is an innovation, and the British meaning 'inlet' is the original one. In other cases, both Englishmen and Americans have made innovations, but different ones, for example in the naming of new

objects, so that we find American railroad, auto, antenna, sidewalk, and subway beside British railway, car, aerial, pavement, and underground.

People on both sides of the Atlantic have at different times tried to make a virtue either of archaism or of innovation, usually claiming of course that the virtue belonged particularly to their own form of the language. Some, indeed, have managed to claim a monopoly of both virtues simultaneously. Such disputes are pointless: neither archaism nor innovation is a virtue in itself.

American Dialects

The American language is not monolithic, any more than the British, but consists of an agglomeration of dialects, both regional and social. The regional dialect areas are larger than those of Britain, a relatively uniform style of speech often stretching over hundreds of miles of country, where in Britain it would be tens of miles. There are three major dialect regions in the United States, the Northern, the Midland, and the Southern, the Midland being divided into North Midland and South Midland. Each of these main regions can in turn be subdivided

into subdialect areas, the exact number of which is uncertain, as the American dialect survey is not yet finished.

These dialect areas show differences in pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary. For example, the r sound has been retained before consonants and pauses (as in barn, father) in the Midlands, the interior South, and most of the North; but it has been lost in the coastal South, in eastern New England, and in New York City. Britain and the United States are similar in this respect: it is not true, as is sometimes popularly thought, that all Americans pronounce the r in these positions, and that no Englishmen do. In fact, in both countries the r is pronounced in some regions but not in others (in England, for example, it is pronounced in the West Country). But this fact has been obscured by the great prestige enjoyed in Britain by 'public school English', which is one of the styles where the r is lost. In vocabulary, an example is the pair of words pail (which is Northern) and bucket (which is Midland and Southern); here again the situation resembles that in England (where, however, bucket is northern and pail southern). In grammar, the form dove, as the past tense of the verb to dive, is characteristic of the North, the other areas using dived.

The American dialect areas have no direct correspondence to those of Britain. The early settlers were a mixed lot, as indeed can be seen from the place names they took with them, like Portsmouth, Norwich, Bangor, Boston, Worcester, York, Belfast, Exeter, and Ipswich. Each community must have had its own particular mixture, which was gradually levelled out into a local dialect. As the frontier was pushed westwards, the original dialect groups on the east coast expanded along fairly well marked lines, and of course underwent modifications in the process.

American Pronunciation

The differences in pronunciation between British and American English are not as simple as they seem to the casual listener. It is not possible to take an English and an American speaker and simply say that where the Englishman produces sound A the American produces sound B. There is not usually any such one to one correspondence, for the distribution of the phonemes often differs in the two forms of the language. For example, the lengthening of short /a/ before voiceless fricatives, which took place in England in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, did not occur in most American dialects, so that in words like fast,

bath, and half an American uses the same vowel as in cat, whereas a southern Englishman uses the same vowel as in father.

Sometimes the distribution of a phoneme varies considerably in different American dialects. This can be illustrated with an example given by the American dialectologist Professor W. Nelson Francis: the words cot, bomb, caught, and balm. Some American speakers make the same distinctions as British speakers in their treatment of these four words, i.e. they recognize three different vowels ([ɔ], [ɔ:], [a:]), those in cot and bomb being the same. There are other speakers, however, who recognize only two different vowels. Some of these have one vowel for cot and bomb (a short [a]) and a second vowel for caught and balm (a long [a:]). Others, however, have one vowel for cot and balm (a short [a]) and a second one for caught and bomb (a short [ɔ]). And there is yet another group of speakers which uses only one vowel for all four words, namely a short [ɔ].

There are also differences between British and American English in stress and intonation. In general, southeastern English uses more violent stress contrasts and a wider range of pitch than American does. Where the Englishman gives a word one heavy stress and several very weak ones, the American often gives it a

secondary stress on one of the weak syllables. This is the case, for example, with words ending in -ary, like military and temporary, where the American has a secondary stress on the third syllable. As a result, southeastern English on the whole moves faster than American English, since there are fewer stresses: and the whole rhythm of English, as we have seen, tends to an equal spacing of stresses. And it tends to have more reduced vowels than American English (as in the third syllable of military). Northern English speech, however, is closer to American in movement than southeastern English is.

American Grammar

In grammar and syntax, the differences between British and American usage are not great, at any rate if we confine ourselves to educated speech and writing. We have already noticed two minor differences: the form dove for dived, and the American use of 'do have' where an Englishman says 'have got'; of course, we also use 'do have' in Britain ('Do you have dances in your village?'), but the distribution of the two forms is different. Again, American has the two forms 'I have got' (meaning 'I have') and 'I have gotten' (meaning 'I have acquired' or 'I have become'), where British English uses only the first form.

An American can use impersonal one, and then continue with his and he; for example 'If one loses his temper, he should apologize'. This sounds odd to an Englishman, who replaces his and he by one's and one. The American in his rum is likely to be surprised by the British use of a plural verb and plural intensive pronoun in sentences like 'The government are considering the matter themselves.' Prepositions, too, are sometimes used differently: an Englishman lives in Oxford Street, whereas an American will usually live on it; and an Englishman caters for somebody, while an American caters to him. But, while example of this kind could be multiplied, they are all minor things: in all essentials, British and American syntax are identical.

American Vocabulary

The largest divergences are perhaps in vocabulary. Expanding across a new continent, with new flora and fauna and different natural features from those of Europe, building up a new society, with its own political institutions, its own social customs, its own recreations, its various ways of earning its living, the Americans were impelled to adapt old words or invent new ones to meet their many needs. The very names for topographical features

evoke a specifically American atmosphere, and words like gulch, bluff, creek, rapids, and swamp seem as much out of place east of the Atlantic as moor, heath, fen, and coomb do west of it.

A large part of the specifically American vocabulary was borrowed from other languages. The first contacts of the settlers were with the American Indians, and quite a number of words were borrowed from them, especially in the seventeenth century. Many of the Indian words were rather long, and they were often shortened and simplified by the borrowers: thus *seganku* became *skunk*, and *pawcohiccora* was borrowed as *hickory*. Occasionally the form of the word was altered to give it English elements with a meaning of their own, as when *wuchak* was borrowed as *woodchuck*; this is the process known as popular etymology.

Many of the words borrowed were the names of the American flora and fauna, like *chipmunk*, *hickory*, *sequoia*, *skunk*, and *terrapin*. Others were words connected with American Indian culture, like *wigwam*, *totem*, *wampum*, and *powwow*; this last word originally meant 'medicine man', and passed through a whole series of changes of meaning before reaching its present one of 'informal conference, discussion'. Among the other words borrowed are some in the sphere of politics, like *caucus* and

Tammany. And some American place and river names are also Indian: Mississippi means 'big river', and Chicago perhaps means 'place of wild onions'.

Even more words, several hundred in all, were borrowed from Spanish, for the Spaniards had established solid and permanent settlements in the New World, and the American pioneers encountered them at many points during their expansion. Borrowings are especially common in the southwest of the United States. Many of the loans go back to the seventeenth century, though there are also a large number from the nineteenth. A number of them, again, are topographical, like sierra and canyon, or words for flora and fauna, like alfalfa, armadillo, and cockroach. A large number come from ranch life, like ranch, corral, lasso, stampede, mustang, and bronco; perhaps with these we can group words for clothing, like poncho and sombrero.

One other interest of the Spanish settlers, mining, is seen in such loans as bonanza and placer, and there are also words connected with the administration of justice, like calaboose, desperado, and vigilantes. Miscellaneous loans include filibuster, hombre, pronto, 'stevedore, tornado, and vamoose. There are also many

Spanish place names, especially saints' names like Santa Barbara and San Francisco.

In the north, there was contact right from the beginning with the French, and a number of words were borrowed from them, especially in the eighteenth century. They again include topographical words, like prairie and rapids, and flora and fauna, like pumpkin and gopher. This last word is from French *gaufre*, which means 'honeycomb', but has been borrowed as the name of a small rat-like animal, because of its honeycomb of burrows. From French, too, come names of coins, cent and dime; the latter word in fact already existed in England, having been borrowed in Middle English times, and it is found in Shakespeare, but as an American monetary term it is a reborrowing.

There were also a few borrowings from the Dutch settlers in North America, who were centered on New Amsterdam (which in 1644 was taken by the British and became New York). The loans include food names like cookie and waffle, and miscellaneous words like boss, boodle, dope, snoop, and perhaps Yankee, which may be derived from the Dutch *Jankin* ('little John') or *Jan Kees* ('John Cheese'), in which case it will have

been a patronizing name given by the Dutch to the English settlers of New England.

Later, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, large numbers of immigrants of many nationalities entered the United States. But their contribution to the American vocabulary is remarkably small, because the language of the immigrant has low prestige in the United States, and he is usually anxious to Americanize himself as thoroughly as possible. The largest number of loans are from German, for the German influx in the nineteenth century was particularly massive, and there is still a considerable German-speaking population in the United States. These borrowings include food names like *dilicatessen* and *hamburger*, educational terms like *semester* and *seminar*, and a number of miscellaneous words like *loafer* and *nix*.

These contacts with other languages are not the only sources of the specifically American vocabulary. The same processes of word formation have been going on in Britain and America - affixation, compounding, conversion, and so on and sometimes, inevitably, different words have been coined for the same thing: *petrol* and *gasoline*, *tram* and *street car*, *lift* and *elevator*, and so on. Nor are all the names for specifically American phenomena

borrowed from other languages. Native material has been used for coining new words, like groundhog and bullfrog, or existing English words have been given a new application, like robin (used for a bird of the thrush family) and corn (specialized to mean what an Englishman calls maize).

Indeed, in the coining of new words and phrases, the Americans in modern times have been more exuberant and uninhibited than the British. After the American Revolution, the Americans broke away even more fully than before from English traditions, linguistic as well as social and political, and were much less restrained by upper class ideals of decorum in their treatment of the language. The exuberance and the love of novelty were encouraged by the existence of the ever-moving frontier, which for over two hundred years kept bringing new American communities into existence, and encouraged the pioneer spirit. The frontier spirit is no doubt partly responsible for the American gift for coining lively and telling new phrases, like 'flying off the handle' or 'barking up the wrong tree'. It may also be responsible for the love of the grandiloquent that turns an undertaker into a mortician and a spittoon into a cuspidor.

CHAPTER NINE

VARIETIES OF ENGLISH

STANDARD ENGLISH

The divergent development that has taken place in the English language as it has spread over the world during the last three hundred years raises the question of Standard English. Does it exist? If so, what is it?

Inside England, as we have seen, one form of the language, basically an East Midland dialect, became accepted as a literary standard in the late Middle Ages. This does not mean, of course, that dialect differences disappeared within England, or even that all educated Englishmen spoke in the same way: in the plays and the novels of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries we often meet country gentlemen who are represented as speaking a local dialect. But in the last century or two there has been a strong tendency for the English upper and upper middle classes to adopt a uniform style of speech. One of the causes of this has been the influence of the great public schools, which have dominated the education of the English gentry at least since the time of Arnold of Rugby in the early Victorian age.

This 'public school' English is obviously a variant of southeastern English, but it has in fact ceased to be a regional dialect and has become a class dialect, spoken by members of the English gentry whatever part of the country they come from. It has great prestige, and by many English people is considered the only really 'correct' form of speech. But of course it is not spoken by all educated English people, unless we equate 'educated' with 'educated at a public school': and that is really rather too flattering to the public schools. Today, in fact the majority of English people educated to university level are not from public schools, and there is an increasing tendency for educated people to speak the educated form of their regional dialect. On the other hand, the more 'educated' a regional dialect is, the more nearly it approximates to public school English.

However, while educated southeastern English, and the class dialect of the public schools derived from it, have established themselves as prestige languages in England, their claims to be the only standard form of English speech do not meet with much sympathy in other parts of the English-speaking world.

Even in the British Isles there are rivals, for Irishmen and Scots have their own forms of educated speech, and see no reason why they should be considered inferior to the speech of Eton or Harrow. Nor have the inhabitants of New Zealand, Australia, Canada, or the United States any reason to mimic the language of the English upper classes, since they fail to see any way in which it is superior to their own language.

The American attitude to regional dialects is more tolerant than the English one: an educated man is expected to speak the educated form of his regional dialect, and no region has special prestige in this respect; still less is there a non-regional class dialect with super-prestige. This attitude would be a sensible one for us to adopt towards the varieties of English as a whole.

The English language is not the monopoly of the inhabitants of Britain: we have no sole proprietary rights in it, which would entitle us to dictate usage to the rest of the English-speaking world. Nor is it the monopoly of the Americans, or the Australians, or any other group: it belongs to us all. It would be reasonable to give parity of esteem to all educated forms of English speech, whatever country they are found in, and in whatever region of that country.

Fortunately, there is a solid core of common usage in all English-speaking countries, which makes it possible to talk of 'standard world English'. The regional variations that we have been discussing are especially marked in the spoken language (many of them are differences in pronunciation), and are greatest in informal, slangy, and uneducated speech. But if we examine the more formal uses of language, and especially if we confine ourselves to a formal style of written language, the differences become small. In formal writing, the essential structure of the language is practically the same throughout the English-speaking world; the differences in vocabulary are perceptible but not enormous; and the differences in spelling negligible. There is, therefore, a standard literary language which is very much the same throughout the English-speaking community, and it is this, if anything, which deserves to be called Standard English.

The reality of this literary standard can be seen from the fact that it is often difficult to say what part of the world a piece of writing comes from. Of course, a good deal depends on the kind of writing -- how familiar it is in style, how nearly it models itself on everyday speech. If you are presented with a page from Mr Brendan Behan's autobiography or from Mr J. D. Salinger's

Catcher in the Rye, you do not need to be much of a detective to guess that the authors are from Ireland and the United States respectively. But suppose you open a novel and find that it starts like this:

“Love conquers all -- omnia vincit amor, said the gold scroll in a curve beneath the dial of the Old French gilt clock. To the dial’s right, a nymph, her head on her arm, drowsed, largely undraped, at the mouth of a gold grotto where perhaps she lived. To the dial’s left, a youth, by his crook and the pair of lambs with him, a shepherd, had taken cover. Parting fronds of gold vegetation, he peeped at the sleeping beauty. On top of the dial, and all unnoticed by the youth, a smiling cupid perched, bow bent, about to loose an arrow at the peeper’s heart. While Arthur Winner viewed with faint familiar amusement this romantic grouping, so graceful and so absurd, the clock struck three.”

Is the nationality of the author really so evident? Perhaps an Englishman would have written “To the right of the dial” rather than “To the dial’s right”, but this is by no means certain. And there is hardly any clue beyond this. In fact it is the work of an American, the opening of By Love Possessed, by James Gould Cozzens, published in 1957. But it is difficult to see anything in

it that could not have been written by an Englishman or an Irishman or an Australian: it is Standard World English.

Of course, the existence of a standard literary language does not in itself prove that Spoken English is a single language. But experience shows that educated English-speaking people from any part of the world have no serious difficulties in understanding each others' speech. Things are a little more difficult when the speakers are uneducated, especially if they are old and have spent their whole lives in small isolated communities. An aged agricultural labourer from a village in Norfolk or in Cornwall who had never lived outside his birthplace would no doubt have some difficulty in conversing with a similar character from the United States or with a bushwhacker from the Australian outback. But even in this case there is a chain of mutual comprehension which could easily be established. The old Norfolk labourer can converse easily with the younger men of his own village, they can converse easily with the townsfolk in Norwich, the latter can converse easily with educated people from New York, and so on along the chain. For all their rich variety and regional diversification, the dialects spoken in the British Isles, in the Commonwealth countries, and

in the United States still form one single entity, the English language.

ENGLISH TODAY AND TOMORROW

In the 20th century, the English language entered on a period of quite considerable change. One encouraging feature is that the divergent tendencies that have been apparent over the past few centuries now seem to have been slowed down, and perhaps even reversed. We have seen how, as English spread over the world from the seventeenth century onwards, local varieties inevitably sprang up in North America, in Australia, and so on. This is not to be regretted: the rich variety of English is one of the things that make it an exciting language to speak and to hear. But an indefinite continuation of the divergent processes would ultimately break up English into a number of separate languages, as Proto-Germanic was broken; and this would be an unhappy thing for us, and for the world. As it is, we have some reason to feel optimistic about the continuing unity of English, and about its prospects as a major medium of world intercourse.

DIALECT MIXING

The slowing down of the divergent trend has been due to the great development of communications (steamships, aircraft, telegraph, telephone) and the rise of the mass media (the popular press, the cinema, broadcasting, television). These things have enabled the different regional varieties of English to influence one another, and so to reduce their differences. Such influences have been mutual, but at present the major influence in the English-speaking world is undoubtedly the language of the United States, and this influence penetrates everywhere that English is spoken as a mother tongue.

Not only do Americans form by far the largest single body of speakers of English, but also of course they have a preponderance of economic and political power and prestige. And considerations of this kind play a major part in the influence of a language. Latin became the dominant cultural language of Western Europe, not because it was intrinsically superior to Greek or Arabic, or was the vehicle for a finer literature than they, but simply because of the political and administrative achievements of Imperial Rome. Similarly the wealth and

power of the United States make her a creditor nation in linguistic matters, as in others.

American influence shows itself especially in vocabulary. When I was giving examples of new words which had arisen in America, you were probably surprised to learn that some of them were of American origin. Words like cockroach, stevedore, tornado, and loafer are so familiar to us that we do not think of them as Americanisms; and the same is true of phrases like 'having an axe to grind' and 'barking up the wrong tree'. More recent importations, like gimmick or package deal or blurb or cagey or rugged (in the sense of 'robust') are still conscious Americanisms, but will no doubt become naturalized in Britain in due course.

Inside Britain a somewhat similar process is going on. The different dialects are being mixed and leveled. In addition to the influence of the mass media, there has been that of universal and compulsory education, dating from the last quarter of the nineteenth century, which has worked against the broader dialect elements, both regional and social. Moreover, the population has become more mobile: the small self-contained community has practically disappeared, there has been continuing migration to

the great cities, and in two world wars there has been mixing of men in enormous conscript armies.

As a result, the traditional rural dialects have now virtually vanished, and have been replaced by new mixed dialects. This does not mean, of course, that dialect differences have disappeared: a Manchester man still speaks differently from a London man; and a Manchester millhand still speaks differently from a Manchester company director. But it does mean that the range of variation has been reduced, and that the more idiosyncratic usages are disappearing, in vocabulary, in grammar, in pronunciation.

RECEIVED PRONUNCIATION AND REGIONAL ACCENTS

One can refer to the prestige language of the English gentry, and the influence of the public schools in making it more or less universal among the upper and upper-middle classes in recent times. It is above all in pronunciation that this form of the language differs from other educated forms, since, as we have seen, the grammar and vocabulary of educated English vary relatively little in different parts of the world.

The pronunciation of the public-school speaker is often called Received Pronunciation, or just RP. Now the leveling process that is going on among the English dialects, while it tends to produce standard grammar and a common vocabulary, does not necessarily produce speakers of RP. Many English schoolteachers, for example, do not use RP, but the educated form of their regional accent; and it is towards this, rather than towards public-school English, that the influence of the schools works.

It also seems likely that RP has itself lost some of its prestige in the present century, with the rise of democracy and the consequent loss of the monopoly in power and education formerly enjoyed by public-school men. This has been especially so since the Education Act of 1944, which threw open a higher education to the children of the lower and lower-middle classes who were talented enough and tough enough to survive the rat race in the schools. Today, the majority of English university students are not speakers of RP, and of course it is from the universities that a large part of the English professional classes are recruited. Consequently, it is becoming increasingly common for professional men to speak with an educated regional accent,

as in America. I do not wish to suggest that public-school speech has lost all its magic. It still has great prestige, for example in the City, in many parts of the Civil Service, and among officers of the armed forces. But it surely is true that the public schools are no longer felt to have a monopoly of 'correct speech', and that the prestige of educated regional speech has risen enormously in the present century.

Indeed, many people would no longer define Standard English or Received Pronunciation as that of the upper classes or of the public schools, but rather as that of educated people in southeastern England, thus making an educated regional accent into the standard. It is perhaps symptomatic that Daniel Jones, in his celebrated 'Pronouncing Dictionary', gives both criteria, for he claims that his dictionary records the pronunciation of people from the southeast of England who were educated at public schools.

There is, consequently, a tendency in present-day England to draw the boundaries of 'Standard English' and of 'Received Pronunciation' rather wider than formerly, and to take into account the usages of a larger part of the population. Hence some of the changes that seem to be taking place in the language may

be more apparent than real: they may be changes in acceptance, rather than actual substantive changes. What formerly existed as a usage in some group, but was considered substandard, may now come to be accepted as standard, because of the changing definition of 'standard'. It does seem however, that there are also substantive changes going on in the language, in pronunciation, in grammar, in vocabulary.

CHANGES IN VOCABULARY

The expansion of the vocabulary seems to be going on at a great rate in our time. Many new words continue to be coined from Greek and Latin roots for use in science and technology, and some of these get into the general vocabulary, like cosmonaut and stereophonic. These two words illustrate the way in which technical terms are adopted by the general public in particular spheres that interest them in this case space-travel (and science fiction) and sound recording. The word stereophonic (now usually shortened to stereo) is presumably coined on the analogy of stereoscopic.

However, not all new scientific and technical words are coined from Latin and Greek elements. The engineering industries in

particular tend to use existing English word elements, and one very common habit is the coining of new compound verbs by back-formation. Example of this process are the verbs to case-harden, to centre-drill, to colour-code, to custom-build, to drop-forge, to field-test, to impact-extrude, to instrument-check, and to self-adjust. Conversely, not all new learned formations are in the field of science or technology: escalation, for example, comes from political-military circles, and psychedelic has arisen in the modish adolescent scene.

In addition to these specialist formations, more popular words continue to arise in large numbers. Affixation is still one of the favorite methods of word-formation. Among the fashionable prefixes of recent years can be mentioned crypto- (crypto-Communist), neo-(neo-Nazi), and above all mini-. The vogue of mini-began in the early 1960s, with the popularity of the Mini-Minor car (soon shortened to Mini), and led to coinages like minicab and minivan. But the real flowering of the prefix Carrie with the invention of the miniskirt in 1966, which made it so popular that in recent years we have had mini-practically-everything.

In the wake of mini-came maxi-and midi-, products of that flux of fashion which is so necessary to the people who make their money out of clothes. At the same time, more traditional prefixes continue to be used, like de- (debug, defrost, debrief), un- (unfunny), pre- (previtaminize), and non- (non-event). Among suffixes active in our time, we can note -er (pot-holer, commuter), -ize (finalize), -ry (weaponry, rocketry, circuitry), and -manship (gamesmanship, brinkmanship, one-up-manship).

Compounding also continues to be a common method of word-formation. For example, the coming of air travel has led to many compounds in air- (aircrew, air-hostess, airstrip, air-minded). Among other recent compounds can be cited disc-jockey, flower-power, hindsight (formed on analogy with fore-sight), off-white, and security-conscious. Most of the examples are nouns, but there are also some adjectives.

Conversion also continues to be used extensively; it is especially used to form new verbs, like to screen, to streamline, to feather-bed, to ad-lib. New compound nouns are also formed by conversion from verbs, like count-down, fly-over, and underpass; the American word teach-in has recently had a great vogue in Britain, and has led to other similar formations, like love-in.

A curious recent example of conversion is the use of the adjective cool as a noun, in the expression 'keep your cool'; this is perhaps produced by contamination, the common expression 'keep cool' having been affected by expressions like 'keep your head'. There are also new attributive uses of nouns, like top ('a top model, general, etc.'). Notice also a whole sentence converted into an attributive element of this kind: 'do it yourself', in expressions like 'a do-it-yourself shop'.

Shortenings, too, continue to produce new words. Among these is one of the vogue-words of recent years, fab, a shortening of fabulous. Other recent examples are mod, op-art, pop-singer, show-biz, and hi-fi. Back formations also continue to occur, especially to produce new verbs, like automate, escalate, liaise, locomote (from automation, escalation, liaison, locomotion).

Loans play only a small part in the expansion of the present-day vocabulary, but a few foreign words do continue to drib in. French words, as ever, are often to do with fashion or the arts: couture, montage, collage, compere, and more recently boutique and discothique (now commonly shortened to disco). German writings on psychology have long been influential in England,

and this is reflected in the use of the German word *angst* ('anxiety'), and the rather less common use of *schadenfreude* ('mischievous pleasure in the misfortunes of others').

The word *moped* is also a loan; in structure it is plainly a blend, but the blending did not take place in Britain; the word was invented in Sweden in 1952, and from there it spread to Germany and to England. Also Scandinavian in origin are the words *ombudsman* (Danish *ombudsmand*, Norwegian *ombudsmann*, Swedish *ombudsman*) and *orienteering* (Swedish *orientering*, 'cross-country foot-racing with map and compass', Norwegian *orienteringsløp*, 'race of this kind'). The Eskimo languages do not strike one as a very likely source of new, English words, but they have in fact given us the word *anorak*.

CHANGES IN MEANING

Changes in meaning also continue, as always. One cause of semantic change, as we have seen, is the form of the word in question, which may cause it to be confused with another word which it resembles. An example of this in our own time is the word *format*; this is a technical term of bibliography, referring to the shape and size of a book (*folio*, *quarto*, *octavo*, etc.): this is

the only meaning recorded in the Oxford English Dictionary. Recently, however, people have begun to use it to mean ‘layout, design’ (e.g. of a page, a poster), and even more generally to mean ‘form’, so that people talk about the format of a conference, or of a lecture-course.

This development illustrates the way in which the meaning of a word becomes wider when it moves out of a specialist sphere into the general vocabulary, but it is probably also an example of the influence of another word, in this case the word form. In fact many people seem to regard format as simply a more magniloquent version of the word form, and use it accordingly. Another recent example of such formal influence is the word enormity; this means ‘extreme wickedness, outrageous crime’, but some people now use it in the sense ‘great size’; this is presumably due to confusion with enormousness, or simply to the influence of the adjective enormous.

Other pairs of words in which such semantic influence is often seen are adopt/adapt (sometimes leading to a new noun adaption), economic/economical, historic/historical, masterful/masterly, secret/secretive, sensuous/sensual, and (strange to say) ingenuous/disingenuous. The attentive reader of

the daily paper should have no difficulty in spotting the semantic changes produced by confusions of such pairs.

A recent example of narrowing of meaning is the noun *probe*. In early Modern English this was a medical word, meaning 'instrument for exploring a wound', but later it was generalized to mean 'investigation, examination', and in this sense it is common in newspaper headlines (e.g. Labour Demands Rent Probe). Recently, however, a new specialization of meaning has taken place, and *probe* has come to mean 'space vehicle for scientific investigation', or even just 'space vehicle'. A recent example of the opposite process, the widening of meaning, is *syndrome*. This is a medical or psychological term meaning 'a complex of symptoms', but nowadays it is often used popularly to mean simply 'phenomenon'.

A recent example of loss of intensity seems to me to be the word *obscene*; formerly this was rather a strong word, but is now commonly used as a vague epithet of disapproval, especially in political journalism, and so is losing its force. Perhaps a similar desire for emphasis is responsible for the popularity of phrases to replace the word now. This little monosyllable is often too unemphatic or too laconic for the public speaker or the journalist,

who replaces it by expressions like ‘in this day and age’, and ‘(as) at the present time’, and ‘as of now’.

Other words worth keeping an eye on are atomic, book, budget, economy, and refute, which you may find used to mean ‘powerful’, ‘magazine’, ‘cheap’, ‘large’, and ‘deny’. Of course, it is not only single words that change in meaning: the same thing can happen to whole phrases. An example of this that has struck me recently is the expression ‘as far as I’m concerned’, which is now often used to mean ‘in my opinion’; and another is ‘in terms of’, which often seems to mean ‘concerning, with reference to’.

CHANGES IN PRONUNCIATION

In the educated speech of southeastern England, there seems to have been a change in the quality of some vowels during the present century: the /ʌ/ of words like cut and jump is now made farther forward than it was, nearer to the [a] of French chat; the /ɔ:/ vowel of words like law and horse, on the other hand, has become closer, nearer to the [o:] of French beau.

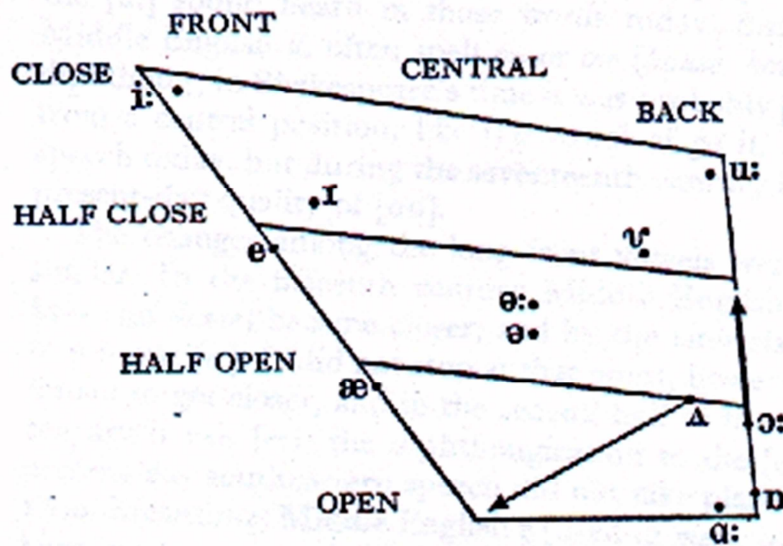


FIG. 16. Vowel diagram for the pure vowels of present-day British English (Received Pronunciation).
 Examples: green /grɪn/; sit /sɪt/; bed /bed/; hat /hæt/; father /'fɑ:ðə/; dog /dɒg/; law /lɔ:/; cut /kʌt/; put /pʊt/; food /fu:d/; bird /bɜ:d/.

The long pure vowels /i:/ (as in keep and see) and /u:/ (as in hoop and too) are becoming diphthongized: in the speech of many people, /i:/ is now the glide [ii], that is to say, it begins at [i] and then moves to the position of [i:]. Similarly, /u:/ is often the diphthong [uu], that is, it begins at [u] and then glides to the position of [u:]. In substandard speech, these diphthongs often begin at an even opener and more central position, for example from the position of [ə], thus becoming [əi] and [əu]. Typical

positions for the pure vowels of present-day English (Received Pronunciation) are shown in the vowel diagram in Figure 16. The current changes in /ʌ/ and /ɔː/ are shown by the arrows.

In unstressed syllables, the /ə/ phoneme is spreading at the expense of other short vowels. For example, it is often heard instead of /i/ in the unstressed syllables of *system*, *waitress*, *remain*, *kitchen*, and *women*; and it sometimes replaces other vowels too, for example in words like *sawdust* and *boycott*. In this respect, British pronunciation is following in the wake of American and Australian.

Among the consonants, the long-term historical process of weakening and loss at the ends of words seems to be continuing. Final consonants which are especially often lost in familiar speech are /t/, /d/, and /n/. For example, the /d/ is often lost in phrases like *old man*, the /n/ in *fifteen miles*, and the /t/ in *half past five*. There are also various minor changes going on: for example, assimilations, such as the pronunciation of *tenpence* as *tempence*, or of *due* as *jew*; and the continuing spread of intrusive /r/, heard in such phrases as ‘the idear of it’,’ *Indiar* and *Ghana*, the *lawr* of the sea. Intrusive /r/ arises by analogy with words like *father* and *beer*, which (for historical reasons) quite

regularly have a final /r/ before a vowel, but not before a consonant or a pause.

There are also changes going on in the way words are stressed. In a number of words of two syllables, the stress has been moved within living memory from the second to the first syllable *garage*, *adult*, *alloy*, *ally*. In some words of more than two syllables, there is an apparent tendency to move the stress from the first to the second syllable: *doctrinal*, *communal*, *formidable*, *aristocrat*, *pejorative*, *hospitable*, *controversy*, and many others. However, the forms with the stress on the second syllable are not new ones, and it seems that here we have a change of acceptance (or the beginnings of it) rather than a substantive change. The pronunciations with first-syllable stress are upper-class ones, and the other forms are permeating up from below, as part of the dialect mixing of our time. The words *cigarette* and *magazine* are normally pronounced in Britain with the main stress on the final syllable; recently, however, some speakers have begun to put the main stress on the first syllable; the change appears to be due to American influence.

As far as sentence stress is concerned, there has been one striking development in recent years, which is now very common among

public speakers, especially on radio and television. This is the habit of giving strong stress to prepositions, even when no contrastive emphasis is intended. It is very common to hear such things as ‘A report ON today’s proceedings IN Parliament will be given BY John Smith OF our news staff’. This is perhaps caused by a desire for clarity and emphasis; something rather similar is often heard from inexperienced amateur actors who, in their anxiety to obtain emphasis, tend to stress far too many words.

A trend which has been encouraged by the spread of secondary education is the adoption of what can be called ‘continental pronunciations’. Words borrowed from abroad soon get assimilated to an English style of pronunciation, either by passing through normal English sound changes or because of the influence of the spelling. Nowadays, however, such words are sometimes given a ‘foreign’ kind of pronunciation again. Thus in the traditional pronunciation the words *gala*, *Gaza*, *Copenhagen*, and *armada* have their stressed *a* pronounced /ei/, but it is now common for /a:/ to be used instead, and in *armada* this pronunciation is universal. Similarly, *valet* and *beret* and *ricochet* are now often pronounced without their final /t/; sometimes *has* has its *i* pronounced /i:/ instead of /ai/; Marlowe’s Dr Faustus is

frequently given the /au/ of the German Faust instead of the traditional English /ɔ:/; and chivalry is almost universally pronounced with a /ʃ/ instead of the traditional /tʒ/. Such changes obviously imply a realization that the word is of foreign origin, and some knowledge of foreign languages; they must be due to some extent to the expansion of education and the increased popularity of foreign travel.

However, there is probably another influence at work too namely the 'new' pronunciation of Latin, which' has continental-style vowels, whereas the 'old' pronunciation had anglicized vowels, The majority of Englishmen under middle age, if they have learnt Latin at all, have learnt the new pronunciation. This no doubt explains why many younger people are reluctant to use the traditional pronunciation of those Latin tags which are commonly used in English, like 'a priori quasi, sine die': the traditional pronunciation sounds wrong, and they tend to use an approximation to the new Latin pronunciation. This even affects Latin proper names; of course, there is no longer that a well-known name like Julius Caesar will lose its traditional pronunciation; but it is now quite common to pronounce Shakespeare's Coriolanus with /a:/ instead of /ei/.

The same change of vowel is sometimes heard in status, apparatus, and stratum, and even occasionally in data. Besides affecting words which are obviously direct from Latin, this 'new Latin' influence also affects a few words which are more remotely derived from Latin, but whose origin is nevertheless plain. Thus the words deity, vehicle and spontaneity traditionally have their e pronounced /i:/ but nowadays it is often pronounced /ei/. The 'new Latin' and 'continental' tendencies must obviously reinforce one another.

CHANGES IN GRAMMAR

In grammar we can see the continuation, in small ways, of the long-term historical trend in English from synthetic to analytic, from a system that relies on inflexions to one that relies on word order and on grammatical words (prepositions, auxiliary verbs, etc.). For example, the form 'whom' is dropping out of use, at any rate in speech, and 'who' tends to be used in all positions. Admittedly, we still have to use 'whom' after a preposition, as in 'To whom shall I give it?' But in fact this is not what we say in ordinary speech we say 'Who shall I give it to?'

Another example of the trend is in the comparison of adjectives, where ‘more’ and ‘most’ are spreading at the expense of the endings -er and -est. Formerly, -er and -est were used more widely than today, and in the seventeenth century you meet forms like *famousest* and *notorousest*. At the beginning of the 20th century, adjectives of more than two syllables always had *more* and *most* (‘*more notorious, most notorious*’). Adjectives of one syllable normally had -er and -est (‘*ruder, rudest*’). The adjectives of two syllables varied, some normally being compared one way (‘*more famous, most famous*’) and some the other (‘*commoner, commonest*’). In this group of two-syllable adjectives, there has been a tendency in the course of the century for -er and -est to be replaced by ‘more’ and ‘most’, and it is now quite normal to say ‘*more common, most common*’; and similarly with *fussy, quiet, cloudy, cruel, simple, pleasant*, and others. Recently, moreover, ‘more’ and ‘most’ have been spreading to words of one syllable, and it is not at all uncommon to hear expressions like ‘*John is more keen than Robert*’ and ‘*It was more crude than I expected*’.

On the whole, noun and verb forms have remained very stable during the later Modern English period, and appear to be so still. There is no tendency, for example, for old mutated plurals like

feet and geese to be changed by analogy to *foots and *gooses, or for strong past tenses like ran and gave to be changed to *runned and *gived. The one exception is the group of learned nouns borrowed from Greek and Latin complete with their original plural forms (formula/formulae, syllabus/syllabi, genus/genera, dogma/dogmata, etc.). Such words are more and more often given analogical plurals in -s (formulas, syllabuses, genuses, dogmas), though sometimes a distinction is made between technical and popular usage (technical formulae, popular formulas).

A slightly 'different development can be seen with some nouns that have a learned plural in -a, like datum, stratum, medium, bacterium, criterion, and phenomenon. These six words are frequently used in the plural, and by many people the plural form, lacking the normal English -s marking, has come to be apprehended as a singular. Hence it is not at all uncommon to hear people say such things as 'this data', 'the mass media is responsible', 'a bacteria', and so on. The decline of the classics in English education has obviously played a part here.

Changes are also taking place among the auxiliary verbs. Thus shall and should are dropping out of use in some positions, and

being replaced by will and would: it is now quite normal to say such things as 'We will all die someday' and 'I would prefer not to'. For giving or asking permission, 'can' is now common instead of 'may', so that children say 'Can I leave the table?' And, especially in the United States, might seems to be spreading at the expense of other auxiliaries, especially may, But in some younger speakers in Britain the opposite trend can be seen, for there seem to be many who never use the word might, always may. Recently this usage has begun to appear in writing; and not long ago. I read in a national newspaper a report on a football match which contained the sentence: 'Just before half-time, Leeds United may have scored a goal. This was puzzling (especially as the match had ended in a goalless draw); but study of the context showed that the author meant that they might have scored a goal (but hadn't).

The verbs 'need' and 'dare' are ceasing to be auxiliaries, and coming more and more to be used as ordinary verbs. Thus it is increasingly normal to say 'Do you need to do it?' and 'I don't dare to do it', and less common to say 'Need you do it?' and 'I dare not do it.' In substandard speech, the same has happened to the auxiliaries 'ought to' and 'used to', for you hear expressions

like 'He didn't ought to' and 'He didn't used to', and such forms are now spreading into educated speech.

It also seems that changes are taking place in the use of the definite article, which is sometimes omitted where formerly it was obligatory, for example in phrases like 'the Bank Rate', 'the United States', 'the Government', 'on the radio', 'the art of the theatre', 'to go to the university', and in the names of diseases like 'the mumps', 'the measles'. It is also becoming common to put titles or descriptive phrases in front of proper names, in cases where this would formerly have been impossible, for example Prime Minister Macmillan (instead of the Prime Minister, Mr Macmillan or Mr Macmillan, the Prime Minister); and similarly with actress Flora Robson, centre-forward John Charles, twenty-seven-year-old pretty London housewife Betty Smith, and so on. This trick comes from the newspapers, but is no longer confined to them, and is even heard in speech.

Another development where the newspapers may have had an influence is the use of expressions like 'London's East End' and 'a symphony's first movement', where formerly it was normal to say 'the East End of London' and 'the first movement of a symphony'; the newspapers no doubt find the new forms shorter

and snappier for headlines. This development is contrary to the normal run of grammatical change in English: the replacement of the preposition 'of' by the inflexion [..' s] is a move from analytic to synthetic.

It is dangerous to extrapolate or to prophesy, and none of us can even guess what the English language will be like in a hundred years time. The changes of the last few decades suggest what forces are at work in the language today, and the likely shape of things in the next few decades; but the history of the language in the coming century will depend, as it always has done, on the history of the community itself.'

One of the striking things at the moment is the remarkable expansion going on in the vocabulary. We cannot tell whether this will continue at its present rate, but if it does the change in a hundred years will be comparable to that of such earlier periods as 1300 to 1400 or 1550 to 1650. Another clear trend at the moment is large-scale dialect mixing, with American influence predominant; if this continues, the divergent tendencies of the language will be held in check, and a unified English language will continue to be available as a medium of international communication.

General Revision

I. Choose the correct answers from a, b, c or d.

P6-7. The period of full inflections was from

- a. 450 to 1150
- b. 1150 to 1500
- c. 1500 to 1800
- d. 1600 to 1700

P6-7. The period from 450 to 1150 is known as

- a. Old English
- b. Middle English
- c. Early Modern English
- c. Late Modern English

P6-7. The period from 450 to 1150 is known as Old English; it is described as the period of

- a. full inflections
- b. leveled inflections
- c. short inflections
- d. lost inflections

P7. The period from to 1150 is known as Old English.

- a. 300
- b. 350
- c. 450
- d. 500

P7. The period from 450 to is known as Old English.

- a. 1150
- b. 1155
- c. 1500
- d. 1600

P7. The period from 1150 to 1500 is known as

- a. Old English
- b. Middle English
- c. Early Modern English
- d. Late Modern English

P7. Inflections were greatly reduced in the period of leveled inflections which is

- a. Old English
- b. Middle English
- c. Early Modern English
- d. None of the above

P7. The Middle English period is known as the period of

- a. lost inflections
- b. short inflections
- c. leveled inflections
- d. full inflections

P7. The period from 1500 till now is known as

- c. Old English
- b. Middle English
- c. Modern English
- d. The Renaissance Period

P7. The English language since is called Modern English.

- a. 850
- b. 1000
- c. 1800
- d. 1500

P7. The English language since 1500 is characterized as the period of.....

- a. leveled inflections
- b. lost inflections
- c. full inflections
- d. over inflections

P7. The period of the lost inflections is known as

- c. Old English
- b. Middle English
- c. Modern English
- d. The Renaissance Period

P47. The beginning of the Modern English period is placed at

- a. 1400
- b. 1500
- c. 1600
- d. 1650

P47. The English language since 1500 is called

- a. Old English
- b. Modern English
- c. Middle English
- d. Classical English

P47. What is/are the main factor(s) that caused English language to develop?

- a. the printing press
- b. the increased communication
- c. the emergence of self-consciousness
- d. all of the above

P47. The factors that caused English to develop in the modern period are all the following except

- a. the rapid spread of popular education
- b. the increased communication
- c. the printing press
- d. the civil wars

P47. The Early Modern English period, "the renaissance period," lasted from 1500 to.....

- a. 1150
- b. 1650
- c. 1800
- d. 1900

P47. The Early Modern English period is also called the

- a. Renaissance Period
- b. Restoration Period
- c. Scientific Age
- d. Romantic Period

P47. The restoration period is another name for the Mid Modern English period that lasted from

- a. 1650 to 1800
- b. 1500 to 1650
- c. 1800 to 2017
- d. 1650 to 1800

P47. The stage from 1650 to 1800 through which Modern English passed is called

- a. the Renaissance
- b. the Restoration Period
- c. the Augustan Age
- d. the Scientific Age

P47. Late Modern English, from 1800 until now, is called the

- a) Scientific age
- b) Augustan age
- c) Restoration age
- d) None of the above

P48. The printing press occurred in Germany and then was introduced into England by.....

- a. William Caxton
- b. William Elyot
- c. Richard Mulcaster
- d. Shakespeare

P49. As a result of popular education the has been able to exert its influence upon language as upon thought.

- a. growth of specialized knowledge
- b. printing press
- c. increased communication
- d. rapid spread of popular education

P50. In the early centuries of the modern period became less and less the vehicle for learned discourse.

- a. Spanish
- b. Greek
- c. Italian
- d. Latin

P51. The factor of has two aspects; one is individual, the other is public.

- a) printing press
- b) rapid spread of public education
- c) increased communication
- d) self-consciousness about language

P54. In the century the modern languages faced three great problems, one of which is the enrichment of vocabulary.

- a. fifteenth
- b. sixteenth
- c. nineteenth
- d. twentieth

P55. In the 16th century modern languages faced some great problems such as

- a) the struggle for recognition
- b) the problem of orthography
- c) the problem of enrichment
- d) All of the above

P55. The problem of struggling for recognition was between English and

- a) Spanish
- b) Latin
- c) Italian
- d) French

P55.were not only the key to the world's knowledge but also the languages in which much highly esteemed poetry, oratory, and philosophy were to be read.

- a. Greek and Spanish
- b. Latin and English
- c. Latin and Greek
- d. Spanish and Italian

P56. In England there were many defenders of English against those who wished to discriminate against it. Of those champions none was more enthusiastic than

- A. Thomas Elyot
- B. Richard Mulcaster
- C. Richard Wilson
- D. Puttenham

P56. The strongest defender of English against the tradition of using Latin was

- a. Thomas Elyot
- b. Thomas North
- c. Richard Mulcaster
- d. Richard Puttenham

P57. virtually poured from the press in the course of the sixteenth century.

- a. Publications
- b. Translations
- c. Arts
- d. Literature

P57. Translations, virtually poured from the press in the course of the century.

- a. thirteenth
- b. fourteenth
- c. fifteenth
- d. sixteenth

P59. The contest between Latin and English had a side.

- a) industrial
- b) agricultural
- c) cultural
- d) commercial

P63. Orthography means the

- a) listening system of a language
- b) spelling system and the study of dialects
- c) writing system of a language
- d) None of the above

P63. The problem of orthography was due to the fact that English spelling was

- a. not fixed
- b. not phonetic
- c. neither phonetic nor fixed
- d. bad

P64. The problem of bringing about greater agreement in the writing of English was recognized in the

- a. sixteenth century
- b. seventeenth century
- c. eighteenth century
- d. twentieth century

P65. In the tendency toward uniformity of English spelling increased steadily.

- a. the first half of the 15th century
- b. the second half of the 16th century
- c. the first three decades of the 18th century
- d. the first half of the 17th century

P65. The fixation of English spelling is associated in most people's minds with the name of

- A. Dean Swift
- B. Shakespeare
- C. Samuel Johnson
- D. Geoffrey Chaucer

P65. The person who fixed the English spelling was

- a. Dr. Johnson
- b. Ascham
- c. Richard Mulcaster
- d. William Shakespeare

P65. In reality, English spelling in its modern form had been practically established by about

- a. 1640
- b. 1642
- c. 1660
- d. 1650

P67. The greatest number of new words that enriched the English language in the 16th and early 17th centuries were borrowed from

- a. Latin
- b. French
- c. Italian
- d. Spanish

P67. The English language acquired thousands of new and strange words from other languages in the

- a) 14th and 15th centuries
- b) 16th and 17th centuries
- c) 18th and 19th centuries
- d) 20th and 21st centuries

P69. The word is an example of the permanent additions of Latin words in the Early Modern English period

- a. consult
- b. brevity
- c. assassinate
- d. create

P70. The adaptation of words in English was affected by the simple process of the Latin ending.

- a) increasing
- b) decreasing
- c) cutting off
- d) None of the above

P70. Words like "climax" and "axis" still have their
form.

- a) Spanish
- b) French
- c) Italian
- d) Latin

P70. In the Early Modern period, many English verbs borrowed
from Latin end in

- a) -ere
- b) -eta
- c) -ete
- d) -ate

P71. There were two methods of borrowing words into English:
directly from Latin and indirectly through

- a. French
- b. Italian
- c. Spanish
- d. Arabic

P71. The majority of words in the Early Modern English period
were borrowed directly from

- a. German
- b. Latin
- c. Spanish
- d. Italian

P71. The word "fact" in English represents the Latin word
.....

- a) fait
- b) fatum
- c) faitum
- d) factum

P73. English vocabulary adopted words from more than 50 languages, most important of which beside Latin and Greek was/were

- a) Spanish
- b) Italian
- c) French
- d) All of the above

P74. The word is an example of English words borrowed from Italian.

- a. comrade
- b. armada
- c. detail
- d. stanza

P74. The English Language adopted the word "balcony" from

- a) Italian
- b) French
- c) Latin
- d) Spanish

P74. From Spanish and Portuguese English adopted the word

- a) Armada
- b) Chocolate
- c) Volcano
- d) All of the above

P76. The English vocabulary at the sixteenth century shows words adopted from more than languages.

- a. fifteen
- b. forty
- c. fifty
- d. sixty

P76. had the largest vocabulary of any English writer.

- a. Alexander Pope
- b. John Dryden
- c. Shakespeare
- d. T. S. Eliot

P77. is the father of English literature

- a. Shakespeare
- b. Marlowe
- c. Chaucer
- d. Bronte

P77-78. If we compare 's pronunciation of short vowels with present day English, we note only two changes of importance, those of /a/ and /u/.

- a) Shakespeare
- b) Hemingway
- c) Chaucer
- d) All of the above

P78. By the 16th century the letter "u" came to be pronounced /ʌ/ instead of

- a) /u/
- b) /u:/
- c) /ʊ/
- d) /ɔ:/

P78. In pronunciation, the letter "a" was pronounced like the "a" in "father" and not as in "name".

- a) Chaucer's
- b) Shakespeare's
- c) Dr. Johnson's
- d) A and B

P78. The great vowel change happened in the century.

- a) 15th
- b) 16th
- c) 17th
- d) 18th

P79. The effects of the Great Vowel Shift can be seen in the comparison of

- a) Hemingway and Eliot
- b) Shakespeare and Chaucer
- c) Chaucer and Hemingway
- d) Eliot and Shakespeare

P81. Because the adjective lost all its, it no longer expresses distinctions of gender, number and case.

- a) beginnings
- b) morphemes
- c) endings
- d) None of the above

P82. The two methods commonly used to form comparative and superlative degrees with the endings “er” and “-est” and with the adverbs "more and most" had been customary in

- a) Old English
- b) Middle English
- c) Mid-Modern English
- d) Late Modern English

P82. A double comparative or superlative is frequent in the works of

- a) Dryden
- b) Hemingway
- c) Chaucer
- d) Shakespeare

P82. The saw the establishment of the personal pronoun in the form that it has had ever since.

- A. 15th century
- B. 16th century
- C. 17th century
- D. 18th century

P83. In the 16th century, the pronoun (you) was substituted for (ye) as a

- a. nominative case
- b. possessive case
- c. accusative case
- d. all the above

P91. The regular ending of the third person singular "-s" and "-es" was all through the Middle English period.

- a) sh
- b) ch
- c) eth
- d) th

P91. By the end of the 16th century, forms like *tells*, *says*, and *gives* were

- a) strange
- b) vanished
- c) rare
- d) predominant

P94. In the century we meet with a considerable body of literature defending English against Latin and other modern languages.

- a. fifteenth
- b. sixteenth
- c. seventeenth
- d. eighteenth

P95. In the Early Modern English period, many books attempted to describe the proper of the English language.

- a) pronunciation
- b) grammar
- c) writing
- d) None of the above

P96. The influence of the had resulted in a form of written English that offers little difficulty to the modern reader.

- a) printing press
- b) efforts of spelling reformers
- c) A and B
- d) None of the above

P97. English in the was much more plastic than now.

- a. Elizabethan Age
- b. Golden Age
- c. Restoration Age
- d. Renaissance Period

P97. English in the Renaissance was much more than today.

- a. radical
- b. complicated
- c. flexible
- d. conservative

P99. The English language was characterised by a search for stability in the

- a) Renaissance period
- b) Augustan age
- c) Modern age
- d) None of the above

P99. The first half of the eighteenth century is commonly designated in histories of literature as the in England.

- a. Classical Age
- b. Augustan Age
- c) Restoration Age
- d. Romantic Period

P99. In England, the 18th century was characterized by a search for

- a. order
- b. value
- c. stability
- d. regulation

P99. Among the general characteristics of the Mid-Modern English period is a

- a) sense of order
- b) search for stability
- c) value of recognition
- d) All of the above

P101. The intellectual tendencies are seen quite clearly in the eighteenth century efforts tothe English language.

- a) standardize
- b) refine
- c) fix
- d) a, b and c

P101. In the 18th century, English grammar was largely
.....

- a) fixed
- b) changed
- c) codified and systemised
- d) uncodified and unsystematized

P101. It was discovered that English had no grammar in the
.....

- a) 17th century
- b) 18th century
- c) 19th century
- d) 20th century

P102. In its effort to set up a standard of correctness in language the rationalistic spirit of the eighteenth century showed itself in the attempt to settle disputed points logically in the period.

- a. Old English
- b. Early Modern English
- c. Mid Modern English
- d. Late Modern English

P102. It was desired in the 18th century to give English a form.

- a) polished
- b) rational
- c) permanent
- d) All of the above

P103. In the 18th century there were attempts to the language.

- a) purify
- b) modify
- c) codify
- d) None of the above

P103. All these are major attempts to codify the English language except

- a. ascertainment
- b. refining the language
- c. publishing literary books
- d. the desire to fix the language

P103. means establishing a uniform language that can be understood by all people in a certain society.

- a. Standardization
- b. Organization
- c. Globalization
- d. Regulation

P103. In the century the need for standardisation and regulation was summed up in the word "ascertainment".

- a) 17th
- b) 18th
- c) 19th
- d) 20th

P103. Dr. Johnson defined as “a settled rule; an established standard.”

- a. ascertainment
- b. affirmation
- c. correctness
- d. all of the above

P106. In matters of language Dean Swift was

- a. supportive
- b. liberal
- c. free-minded
- d. conservative

P106. It was who objected to clipping words and opposed the tendency to contract verbs.

- a. Richard Mulcaster
- b. Dean Swift
- c. Samuel Johnson
- d. William Loughton

P107. One of the most ambitious hopes of the 18th century was to

- a) fix English language
- b) change the English language
- c) fix the Latin language
- d) None of the above

P107. One of the most ambitious hopes of the century was to stabilise the language.

- a) 17th
- b) 18th
- c) 19th
- d) 20th

P107. The idea of an academy received support from several influential persons, notably from

- a) Dr. Johnson
- b) James Buchanan
- c) Dean Swift
- d) Dryden and Evelyn

P107. The suggestion of an English academy occurred early in the

- A. 15th century
- B. 16th century
- C. 17th century
- D. 18th century

P107. In the Age, discussion of an English Academy became much more frequent.

- a) Augustan
- b) Restoration
- c) A and B
- d) None of the above

P107-108. All of the following were attempts to fix the English language in the Mid-Modern English period except

- a) Johnson's dictionary
- b) grammar books
- c) A Proposal for An English Academy
- d) Dryden's essay

P108. By the beginning of the century, the ground had been prepared and the time was ripe for an authoritative plan for an academy.

- a) 16th
- b) 17th
- c) 18th
- d) 19th

P108. *A Dictionary of the English Language* was published by

- A. William Loughton
- B. Joseph Priestley
- C. Samuel Johnson
- D. James Buchanan

P108. The publication in of *A Dictionary of the English Language*, by Samuel Johnson was hailed as a great achievement.

- A. 1731
- B. 1855
- C. 1755
- D. 1760

P109., whose *Practical Grammar of English Tongue*, attacks those who have attempted to force the English language to the method and rules of Latin grammar.

- a. William Loughton
- b. Joseph Priestley
- c. Samuel Johnson
- d. James Buchanan

P109. *The Practical Grammar of the English Tongue* was published in

- a) 1734
- b) 1766
- c) 1784
- d) 1786

P109. From the grammar books in the Mid Modern English period was by William Loughton.

- a. *Practical Grammar of English Tongue*
- b. *A Dictionary of the English Language*
- c. *Short Introduction to English Grammar*
- d. *The British Grammar*

P109. In 1761 Joseph Priestley published

- a. *The Rudiments of English Grammar*
- b. *Short Introduction to English Grammar*

c. *The British Grammar*

d. *A Grammatical Institute of the English Language*

P109. In, Joseph Priestly published *The Rudiments of English Grammar*.

- a) 1666
- b) 1750
- c) 1760
- d) 1761

P109. In 1761 published *The Rudiments of English Grammar*.

- a. Joseph Priestly
- b. Noah Webster
- c. William Loughton
- d.. Samuel Johnson

P109. *Short Introduction of English Grammar* was published by

- a. Joseph Priestly
- b. William Loughton
- c. Robert Lowth
- d. Noah Webster

P109. The *Grammar* by James Buchanan appeared in 1762.

- A. *British*
- B. *Indian*
- C. *Latin*
- D. *American*

P109. *The British Grammar* was published by

- a. James William
- b. Robert Lowth
- c. William Loughton
- d. James Buchanan

P109. *A Grammatical Institute of the English Language* was published by

- a. Joseph Priestly
- b. William Loughton
- c. Robert Lowth
- d. Noah Webster

P109. In, Noah Webster published the second part of *A Grammatical Institute of the English Language*.

- a) 1784
- b) 1773
- c) 1770
- d) 1874

P109. himself envisaged his work as performing the same function as a dictionary of an academy.

- a) William Loughton
- b) Dr. Johnson
- c) Noah Webster
- d) Joseph Priestly

P111. The beginnings of the English occupation of Australia occurred in the century.

- a) nineteenth
- b) eighteenth
- c) sixteenth
- d) seventeenth

P111. The colonizing of Africa was largely the work of the

- a) nineteenth century
- b) fifteenth century
- c) seventeen century
- d) fourteen century

P111. England seized the Dutch settlement at

- a) Cape town
- b) Madras
- c) Bombay
- d) Calcutta

P114. During the first half of the twentieth century, the left their mark on the English language.

- a) world wars
- b) economics
- c) electricity
- d) all of them

P116-117. The growth of science in English is clear in the field of

- a) chemistry
- b) medicine
- c) space science
- d) All of the above

P117. "Dynamo" and "alternating current" are words found in the field of

- a) physics
- b) electricity
- c) chemistry
- d) None of the above

P121. The first electronic digital computers date from and a few other terms have been in general use since then.

- a) WWI
- b) 1877
- c) 19th Century
- d) WWII

P121. The development of computer science gives us words such as

- a) DOS
- b) RAM
- c) mouse
- d) All of the above

P122. Most of words which came into English between 1914 and 1918 were terms.

- a) scientific
- b) electronic
- c) military
- d) economic

P125. In peculiarities of pronunciation and vocabulary have grown up that mark off national and areal varieties from the dialect of the mother country and from one another.

- a) South Asia
- b) Australasia
- c) Canada
- d) all of them

P126. Words from Australia and New Zealand like the word have become general English.

- a) boomerang
- b) apartheid
- c) kangaroo
- d) ranch

P127. The English of Australia is not only characterized by interesting differences of vocabulary but varies strikingly in pronunciation from the received standard of

- a) South Africa
- b) Holland
- c) England
- d) South Asia

P127. British and American speakers use *commando*, *commandeer*, and *trek* in contexts that no longer reflect their history.

- a) West and East African
- b) South African

- c) Australian and New Zealandic
- d) South Asian

P128. South African racial policies gave a new meaning to the word as an area in which black Africans are required to live.

- a) section
- b) zone
- c) location
- d) district

P128. In pronunciation the English of South Africa has been much influenced by the pronunciation of

- a) Afrikaans
- b) Hindi
- c) American
- d) British

P128. English shares with American English

the general disposition to give full value to unaccented syllables.

- a) South African
- b) West and East African
- c) South Asian
- d) Canadian

P129. In Nigeria, languages exist beside English.

- a) two
- b) three
- c) four
- d) five

P129. is the official language in Tanzania, but government business is routinely transacted in English.

- a) Swahili
- b) Igbo
- c) Afrikaans
- d) English

P134. A formal "Proposal for the Publication of a New English Dictionary by the Philological Society" was issued in

- a) 1855
- b) 1914
- c) 1851
- d) 1720

P134. The first editor appointed to deal with the mass of material being assembled for the OED was

- a) Herbert Coleridge
- b) Furnivall
- c) William A. Craigie
- d) Charles T. Onions

P136. In the title Oxford English Dictionary (OED) was added and has since become the standard name.

- a) 1895
- b) 1795
- c) 1995
- d) None of the above

P138. The English language was brought to America in the seventeenth century by colonists from

- a) Australia
- b) Africa
- c) England
- d) Asia

P138. The English language was brought to America by colonists from England who settled along the Atlantic Coast in the century

- a) sixteenth
- b) seventeenth
- c) eighteenth
- d) nineteenth

P142. The typical American pronunciation of the sound 'a' is a

- a) flat a
- b) broad a
- c) short a
- d) long a

P142. At the end of the eighteenth century southern England began to change from what is called a to a

- a) broad a – flat a
- b) flat a – broad a
- c) broad a – thin a
- d) flat a – thin a

P142. At the end of the eighteenth century began to change from what is called a flat *a* to a broad *a* in words like *path, fast, grass, etc.*

- a) Western England
- b) North America
- c) Southern England
- d) New England

P143. Americans still use MAD in the sense of

- a) hungry
- b) crazy
- c) honest
- d) angry

P149. The most noticeable differences between English and American pronunciation is in the treatment of the

- a) /o/
- b) /t/
- c) /r/
- d) /a/

P149. In the 'r' is pronounced in all positions.

- a) Britain
- b) England
- c) America
- d) London

P149. In American English, the letter 'r' is pronounced

.....

- a) before vowels
- b) at the end of a word
- c) in all positions
- d) before consonants

P149. In British English, the /r/ sound isn't pronounced in all cases except

- a) when it is preceded by a vowel sound
- b) when it is preceded by a consonant sound
- c) when it is followed by a consonant sound
- d) when it is followed by a vowel sound

P149. In British pronunciation, the letter 'r' isn't pronounced in these words except

- a) part
- b) receive
- c) car
- d) parcel

P149. The British pronunciation of the phrase "far away" is.....

- a) /fa: əwei/ b) /far əwei/
- c) /fa:r əwei/ d) /fa:r wei/

P149. In England the /r/ sound has except before vowels.

- a) appeared b) disappeared
- c) retained d) none of them

P149. In the 'o' in such words as *not* and *lot* is pronounced with the lips rounded.

- a) America b) England
- c) London d) Europe

P149. The sound /o/ in America has commonly lost its rounding and in most words it is pronounced as the 'a' in, only short.

- a) made b) fat
- c) father d) snake

P149. In England, the word 'been' has the same sound as in

.....

- a) ben
- b) bean
- c) bein
- d) bin

P149. In America, the word 'been' is pronounced like

- a) pin
- b) pen
- c) bean
- d) bin

P149. The word 'leisure' in America has a vowel.

- a) long
- b) short
- c) rounded
- d) all of them

P149-150. has kept the common 18th century pronunciation with a short vowel or a mere vocalic /l/ in words such as *fertile* and *sterile*.

- a) American English
- b) British English
- c) a and b
- d) None of them

P150. An important difference between AE and BE is the greater clearness with which Americans pronounce syllables.

- a) unaccented
- b) first
- c) last
- d) accented

P157. The British word for 'engineer' is.....

- a) conductor
- b) driver
- c) truck
- d) guard

P157. Railroad, engineer and conductor are examples of English.

- a) American
- b) British
- c) Indian
- d) South African

P157. A 'sleeper' in the United States is a in England.

- a) baggage car
- b) sleeping car
- c) van
- d) truck

P157. The American word for British 'lorry' is.....

- a) truck
- b) sleeping car
- c) baggage car
- d) van

P157. The words are both British words.

- a) van and baggage
- b) railway and gas
- c) truck and nasty
- d) lorry and lift

P157. All of these words are British except

- a) gasoline
- b) railway
- c) lorry
- d) dustman

P157. The British word for 'railroad' is.....

- a) expressway
- b) highway
- c) parkway
- d) railway

P157. 'Railroad' is a/an word.

- a) British
- b) American
- c) Spanish
- d) British and American

P157. The British word for 'expressway' is.....

- a) motorway
- b) railway
- c) railroad
- d) quick way

P157. The following words are British except

- a) railway
- b) guard
- c) conductor
- d) luggage

P158. The British word 'barrister' in America means

- a) doctor
- b) baggage
- c) lawyer
- d) engineer

P158. All of the following words are British except

- a) petrol
- b) mail
- c) dustman
- d) lift

P158. All of these words are American except

- a) lift
- b) lawyer
- c) mail
- d) stupid

P158. 'Laundry' in is not only the place where clothing and linen are washed but the articles themselves.

- a) America
- b) England
- c) London
- d) Canada

P158. A 'lobbyist' in England is a

- a) lawyer
- b) pressman
- c) parliamentary reporter
- d) dustman

P159. A 'lobbyist' in is a parliamentary reporter.

- a) England
- b) America
- c) Canada
- d) France

P159. A for Americans isn't a reporter but one who works in the pressroom where a newspaper is printed.

- a) lobbyist
- b) pressman
- c) laundry
- d) journalist

II. Complete the following statements:

1. What are the three stages through which English developed?

.....

2. The trouble was not merely that English spelling was bad. The problem of Orthography was due to that fact that

.....

3. The most enthusiastic man in defending English was

.....

4. In the 16th century the English spelling compared with Latin seemed to be

5. During the first half of the 17th century the tendency toward uniformity of spelling.....

7. English spelling in its modern form had been practically established by about.....

8. The English vocabulary at 16th century showed words taken without change from more than.....

9. Which century saw the establishment of the personal pronoun in the form that it has had ever since?
.....

10. The suggestion of an English academy occurred early in the

11. From the, the British have taken many nautical terms.

12. In the century, the English language entered on a period of quite considerable change.

13. was appointed the fourth member of the editorial staff of the OED.

14. British items such as Chips tend to occur more frequently in the of Canada.

15. A process which has led to quite a considerable expansion of the vocabulary in both Middle and Modern English is called

16. is an important method that means the addition of prefixes and suffixes to existing English words to form new words.

17. The most obvious effects of English expansion in the eighteenth century to be seen in the

18. The publication of Dr. Johnson's dictionary was in

19. English in the Renaissance, at least as we see in books, was much more than now.

20. During the first half of the seventeenth century the tendency toward increased steadily.

III. Choose the correct answer.

1. The development of the English language to its current standard can be followed over a period of about years.

- (a) 1000
- (b) 1500
- (c) 2000
- (d) 2500

2. The language written and spoken during the period from 450 to 1150 is known as

- a. Old English
- b. Middle English
- c. Early Modern English
- d. Modern English

3. Another name for Old English is

- a. Danish
 - b. Gaelic
 - c. Welsh
4. Anglo-Saxon

4. The language written and spoken during the period from 1150 to 1500 is known as

- a. Old English
- b. Middle English
- c. Early Modern English
- d. Modern English

5. The language written and spoken since 1500 is called

- a. Old English
- b. Middle English
- c. Early Modern English
- d. Modern English

6. The first people of the British Isles were Britons and belonged to a race.

- a. Anglo-Saxon
- b. Celtic
- c. Germanic
- d. Greek

7. The Old English period is sometimes described as the period of

- a. lost inflections
- b. short inflections
- c. leveled inflections
- d. full inflections

8. The Middle English period is known as the period of

- a. lost inflections
- b. short inflections
- c. leveled inflections
- d. full inflections

9. The Modern English period is known as the period of

- a. lost inflections
- b. short inflections
- c. leveled inflections
- d. full inflections

10. The name Avon is from the word for 'river'.

- a. Latin
- b. Danish
- c. Celtic
- d. French

11. The words *piano*, *piccolo*, *soprano*, *finale*, *solo*, *sonata*, *opera* are of origin.

- a. Latin
- b. Greek
- c. French
- d. Italian

12. From the English language took the words *cargo*, *cigar*, *cigarette*, and *cork*.

- a. Spanish
- b. Portuguese
- c. French
- d. Italian

13. In Old English *wifmann* (= woman) was, and *wif* (= wife) was

- a. neuter – masculine
- b. neuter – feminine
- c. masculine – feminine
- d. feminine – masculine

14. The word *freedom* is of origin, but *liberty* is of..... origin.

- a. Danish – Celtic
- b. French – Saxon
- c. Saxon – French
- d. French – Latin

15. The word *castra* meaning 'a camp' is of origin.

- a. Anglo-Saxon
- b. Danish
- c. Latin
- d. French

16. The English language belongs to a language family known as the languages.

- a. Indo-European
- b. Semitic
- c. Afro-Asiatic
- d. Caucasian

17. The pronouns *they*, *them* and *there* are of origin.

- a. Anglo-Saxon
- b. Celtic
- c. French
- d. Danish

18. We generally date the Norman-French period in English history from the invasion by..... in 1066.

- a. Julius Caesar
- b. William the Conqueror
- c. King Charles the Simple
- d. Alfred the Great

19. Titles such as *prince* and *princess*, *duke* and *duchess*, *count* and *countess* were brought into the English language by the

- a. Normans
- b. Romans
- c. Danes
- d. Greeks

20. Many Latin words were introduced into the English language through

- a. Greek
- b. French
- c. German
- d. Italian

21. Many Greek words were introduced into the English language through

- a. Latin
- b. French
- c. German
- d. Italian

22. The prefix *anti-* meaning 'against' is of..... origin.

- a. Latin
- b. Greek
- c. French
- d. Anglo-Saxon

23. The factors that caused English to develop in the modern period are all the following except

- a. the rapid spread of popular education
- b. the civil wars
- c. the printing press
- d. the increased communication

24. By about Latin had fallen into disuse as the language of learning in England.

- (a) 1500
- (b) 1600
- (c) 1700
- (d) 1800

25. The printing press was introduced into England about 1476 by

- a. Dr. Johnson
- b. William Shakespeare
- c. William Caxton
- d. Richard Mulcaster

26. had seen the triumph of the English language in England, and the establishment once more of a standard form of literary English.

- a. The early Middle Ages
- b. The late Middle Ages
- c. The early Modern Age
- d. The late Modern Age

27. was the main source of new words in the Renaissance.

- a. French
- b. Greek
- c. Latin
- d. Anglo-Saxon

28. Words taken from one language and incorporated into another are known as

- a. cognates
- b. twin words
- c. loan words
- d. hybrids

29. The first half of the 18th century is commonly designated in histories of literature as in England.

- a. the Restoration
- b. the Renaissance
- c. the Augustan Age
- d. the Elizabethan Age

30. Eighteenth century grammarians aimed to

- a. codify the principles of the language and reduce it to rule
- b. settle disputed points and decide cases of divided usage
- c. point out common errors or what were supposed to be errors, and thus correct and improve the language
- d. All of the above

31. The fixation of English spelling is associated in most people's minds with the name of

- a. Dean Swift
- b. Shakespeare
- c. Samuel Johnson
- d. Geoffrey Chaucer

32. In the English acquired thousands of new and strange words.

- a. 14th and 15th centuries
- b. 16th and 17th centuries
- c. 18th and 19th centuries
- d. 20th and 21st centuries

33. Words like *climax*, *appendix*, *epitome*, *exterior*, *delirium*, and *axis* still retain their form.

- a. Latin
- b. Greek
- c. French
- d. Old English

34. The saw the establishment of the personal pronoun in the form that it has had ever since.

- a. 15th century
- b. 16th century
- c. 17th century
- d. 18th century

35. In the 16th century modern languages faced some great problems such as

- a. the struggle for recognition
- b. the problem of orthography
- c. the problem of enrichment
- d. All of the above

36. The period of the 16th and early 17th centuries is known as the period.

- a. Old English
- b. Middle English
- c. Early Modern English
- d. Modern English

37. In the 16th century modern languages faced some great problems such as

- a. the struggle for recognition
- b. the problem of orthography
- c. the problem of enrichment
- d. All of the above

38. In the 16th century..... were the key to the world's knowledge.

- a. Latin and French
- b. Latin and Greek
- c. Greek and French
- d. French and German

39. The suggestion of an English Academy occurred early in the

- a. 16th century
- b. 17th century
- c. 18th century
- d. 19th century

40. The publication in 1755 of *A Dictionary of the English Language* by was hailed as a great achievement, as it exhibited the English vocabulary much more fully than had ever been done before.

- a. William Loughton
- b. Joseph Priestley
- c. Samuel Johnson
- d. Noah Webster

41. The Great Vowel Shift affected the pronunciation of

- a. short vowels
- b. long vowels
- c. diphthongs
- d. All of the above

42. From the English language adopted the words *banana, chimpanzee, gorilla* and *zebra*.

- a. Africa
- b. India
- c. Australia
- d. Mexico

43. From the English language adopted the words *barbecue, canoe, hurricane, maize, potato,* and *tobacco*.

- a. Africa
- b. India
- c. Australia
- d. Cuba and the West Indies

44. In the 18th century the need for standardization and regulation was summed up in the word

- a. reinforcement
- b. ascertainment
- c. enrichment
- d. recognition

45. The prescriptive distinction between the two verbs *lie* and *lay* was first made in the second half of the century.

- a. sixteenth
- b. seventeenth
- c. eighteenth
- d. nineteenth

IV. Mark the following statements as TRUE or FALSE.

1. The English language is a Semitic language.
2. The story of English in England begins in the first half of the fifth century.
3. The Roman occupation of Britain lasted for about 400 years.
4. Titles such as *prince* and *princess*, *duke* and *duchess*, *count* and *countess* were brought into the English language by the Romans.

5. The pronouns *they*, *them* and *there* are of Anglo-Saxon origin.
6. Old English was an inflected language.
7. The pronouns *they*, *them* and *there* are of Celtic origin.
8. All Middle English long vowels underwent extensive alteration in passing into Modern English.
9. In the 16th and early 17th centuries English acquired thousands of new and strange words that were borrowed only from Latin.
10. The words *justice*, *judge*, *jury*, *court*, *cause*, *crime*, and *traitor* are all of French origin.
11. The words *father and mother*, *sister*, *brother*, *son* and *daughter* are of French origin.
12. Latin was the main source of new words in the Renaissance.

13. The Great Vowel Shift affected both long and short vowels.

14. A noteworthy development of the pronoun in the sixteenth century is the use of *who* as a relative.

15. In the Middle English period the changes in grammar were relatively slight and the changes in vocabulary extensive.

16. English in the Renaissance was much more elastic than now.

17. Words like *climax*, *appendix*, *epitome*, *exterior*, *delirium*, and *axis* still have their Latin form.

18. The 19th century is responsible for the condemnation of the double negative.

19. In modern English, grammatical gender of nouns has completely disappeared.

20. French was the main source of new words in the Renaissance.

21. The fixation of English spelling is associated in most people's minds with the name of William Shakespeare.

22. It is a well-known fact that, except for a man like the Elizabethan translator Philemon Holland, Shakespeare had the largest vocabulary of any English writer.

23. The first half of the 18th century is commonly designated in histories of literature as the Elizabethan Age in England.

24. In the 18th century the need for standardization and regulation was summed up in the word 'recognition'.

25. The English language adopted the words *banana*, *chimpanzee*, *gorilla* and *zebra* from Australia.

26. Words taken from one language and incorporated into another are known as loan words.

27. French was the main source of new words in the Renaissance.

28. The words *piano*, *piccolo*, *soprano*, *finale*, *solo*, *sonata* and *opera* are of French origin.

29. The suggestion of an English Academy occurred early in the fifteenth century.

30. *A Grammatical Institute of the English Language* was published by Samuel Johnson in 1784.

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