

The Gothic has two main branches—Scandinavian and Teutonic. The latter contains two divisions—High and Low German. To the Low German belong the five following tongues:—

- | | |
|---------------------|--------------|
| (1) Old Saxon, | (3) Frisian, |
| (2) Anglo-Saxon, | (4) Dutch, |
| (5) Modern English. | |

This table shows that Modern English is a member of the Low German division of the Teutonic family of the Gothic stock of the Aryan languages.

II. Discuss the influence of the Norman-French upon English.

After the Anglo-Saxon, the Norman-French is the chief element in our language, and its influence may be considered under the following heads:—(1) Its influence upon the vocabulary, (2) upon the grammar, and (3) upon the pronunciation and orthography of English. There is another aspect under which it could be regarded, namely, its influence upon literature; but this is not necessarily connected with the question of its influence upon the language.

1. Influence upon the vocabulary.

(a) It has enlarged and enriched the vocabulary with a vast number of words, and has thus given writers a greater power to vary their diction to suit the subject.

(b) It has fused into one language the chief formative element of the past (Latin) and that of the present, and thus gives English its cosmopolitan spirit.

(c) The peculiarity known as Bilingualism in early English has been perpetuated to our own day. This consists in expressing the same idea by two words, the one English and the other French, as *act* and *deed*, *aid* and *abet*, etc.

2. Influence upon the grammar.

(a) Norman-French has been largely instrumental in bringing about the change from the synthetic to the analytic stage of the language; in other words, it has accelerated the dropping of inflections and the substitution therefor of auxiliary verbs and prepositions. Some of the more striking results may be now given.

(b) The prevalence of the plural in *s* is largely due to Norman-French.

(c) The only termination (*ess*) used to form new feminines is from Norman-French.

(d) The use of the preposition *of* for the 's of the possessive case, sometimes called the Norman genitive.

(e) The adverbial comparison of adjectives and adverbs is after the analogy of the Norman-French.

(f) In poetry the ambidextral adjective originated from the frequent placing of French adjectives after the nouns which they qualify.

3. Influence upon the pronunciation and orthography.

The pronunciation of English has been softened considerably by contact with the Norman-French. Many harsh consonants and gutturals have been toned down, some have become silent. A change in pronunciation and a change in spelling would naturally go hand in hand, but many words retain their old spelling even after change in their pronunciation. The chief changes may be indicated as follows:—

(a) Through its influence many letters have become silent, as *l* in *should*, *would*; *b* in *doubt*, *debt*, etc.

(b) Gutturals have been greatly diminished in number: *gh* is in most words either silent or changed into *f*.

(c) Initial *k* sound has been in many instances changed into a soft *ch* sound, as *chaff*, *churl*, etc.

(d) The use of *e* mute at the end of words.

(e) Though the effect of Norman-French upon pronunciation has been in general favourable, it has vitiated it in one respect: it is partly responsible for the marked sibilancy which characterizes English. English has not only retained the sibilants it had in the Anglo-Saxon stage, but it has adopted those from Norman-French as well.

(f) The French system of accentuation was introduced and is still retained in those English words that terminate in *ade*, *eer*, *ier*, *ee*, *oom*, *ile*, or *in*.

III. Explain the causes which bring about changes in the form of words.