

the sudden and forceful importation of an entirely different language—a language not belonging to the Teutonic stock at all, but to the stock called Pelasgic, the branches of which are to be looked for in the Southern Peninsulas of Europe. The incoming of the Norman-French, who took the land, seized every high place in the state, shut out Englishmen from all but the lowest offices in the Church—who imported their own language, modes of warfare, law, and political constitution, again arrested the harmonious development of our mother-tongue. From 1066 to 1362—three centuries all but four years—the Norman-French tongue was employed in courts of law; and the English yeoman could not plead or bring an action in his own language; and even English boys—as John de Trevisa tells us—had to construe their Latin into the French idiom. The English language remained in a disintegrated form—spoken in a different fashion and with differing vowel-sounds in the North, the South, the East, and the West; and for about two centuries it was hardly written at all. Any literature that existed in French was chiefly an importation and an exotic; and, though many Norman-French words were contributed to our language, its influence upon the writing down of English was wholly bad and confusing. For three centuries the two languages faced each other; and, though English, under the influence of French, entirely changed the build of its sentence, no influence for the better from it affected our notation. In fact, French—and

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