

(i) **Singular** comes from the Lat. *singuli*, one by one; **plural**, from the Lat. *plures*, more (than one).

(ii) Mr Barnes, the eminent Dorsetshire poet, who has written an excellent grammar, called 'Speech-craft,' calls them *only* and *somey*.

19. There are three chief ways of forming the plural in English:—

- (i) By adding **es** or **s** to the singular.
- (ii) By adding **en**.
- (iii) By changing the vowel-sound.

20. **First Mode.**—The plural is formed by adding **es** or **s**. The ending **es** is a modern form of the old A.S. plural in *as*, as *stanas*, *stones*. The following are examples:—

SINGULAR.	PLURAL.	SINGULAR.	PLURAL.
Box	Boxes.	Beef	Beeves.
Gas	Gases.	Loaf	Loaves.
Witch	Witches.	Shelf	Shelves.
Hero	Heroes.	Staff	Staves.
Lady	Ladies.	Thief	Thieves.

(i) It will be seen that *es* in *heroes* does not add a syllable to the sing.

(ii) Nouns ending in **f** change the sharp **f** into a flat **v**, as in *beeves*, etc. But we say *roofs*, *cliffs*, *dwarfs*, *chiefs*, etc.

(iii) An old singular of *lady* was *ladie*; and this spelling is preserved in the plural. But there has arisen a rule on this point in modern English, which may be thus stated:—

(a) **Y**, with a **vowel before it**, is not changed in the plural. Thus we write *keys*, *valleys*, *chimneys*, *days*, etc.

(b) **Y**, with a **consonant before it**, is changed into **ie** when **e** is added for the plural. Thus we write *ladies*, *rubies*, and also *satellites*.

(iv) **Beef** is not now used as the word for a single ox. Shakespeare has the phrase "beef-witted" = with no more sense than an ox.

21. **Second Mode.**—The plural is formed by adding **en** or **ne**. Thus we have *oxen*, *children*, *brethren*, and *kine*.

(i) **Children** is a double plural. The oldest plural was *cild-r-u*, which became *children*. It was forgotten that this was a proper plural, and **en** was added. *Brothers* is also a double plural. **En** was added to the old Northern plural *brethar*—the oldest plural being *brothr-u*.

(ii) **Kine** is also a double plural of *cow*. The oldest plural was *cŷ*, and this still exists in Scotland in the form of *kys*. Then **ne** was added.