

infinitive in 'an' with French 'à' prefixed.

A very great influence was exerted on the pronunciation and consequently on the spelling of our words. The general effect of French on English pronunciation has been to soften the consonants and drop final vowels (other than 'e'), so that instead of being harsh and guttural like modern German, it in a degree resembles the tongues of southern Europe in smoothness and melody, without partaking of their effeminacy.

The tendency of French accent is towards the *end* of words, that of English, on the contrary, is towards the *beginning*. We make use of these tendencies to distinguish words by accent, making a word accented on one syllable assume a certain meaning, and the same word accented on a different syllable assume a different meaning.

The great terminal vowel in English is *e*. In a large number of cases this 'subscript' was added for no other reason than that it was a Frenchism; in other instances it superseded old Saxon vowel terminations; afterwards it came to denote the elongation of the preceding vowel.

Prefixing 'w' before words beginning with *h* or *r* was a favorite fashion of the sixteenth century, probably from association with groups of words already existing. It soon died out, but left two remnants worthy of notice—one in which the *w* is retained in spelling but not in pronunciation, the word 'whole'—the other in which it is retained in pronunciation but not in spelling, the word 'one.' Observe also another fashion of that date, viz: cumulation of consonants, as *sc* for *s*, *ck* for *c* hard, *ll* at the end of words, &c. Some of these have been dropped, but a great many still remain. French influence in the formation of diphthongs in English is noticeable in such words as 'yozeng,' 'about,' 'joint.' The two first are Saxon and were originally spelt

with *u*. The last is genuine French, though our pronunciation of it does not resemble that of the French. Our double vowels *oo* and *ee* were formed from French influence. We have a number of words to denote agents, terminating in *ee*, derived from the French past participle in *é*.

Let us now look at the French influence on our *Grammar*.

The characteristic difference between English and Saxon is that we have now very few inflections. Norman French produced the utmost confusion, and most of the inflections of nouns, adjectives and verbs were lost, and replaced by prepositions and auxiliary verbs.

The Saxon plural of nouns was formed by adding *es* or *en*, while the Norman French plural terminated in flat *s*, and now from occupying a subordinate place in English Grammar, it has come to be the general rule that nouns form their plural in *s*. Our pronouns shew the result of the French influence largely. We have only remaining the nominative and accusative cases singular and plural of the personal pronouns used as real pronouns. The genitive cases are now not pronouns, but pronominal adjectives. The possessive and dative relations have to be expressed by means of prepositions.

The Relative pronouns are derived in Gothic languages from the Demonstratives, as was the case in Saxon, but in Romance languages they are derived from the Interrogatives. In Saxon *who* and *which* had two functions. They were interrogative as well as indefinite pronouns. French has made them relative also, and not only that, but it has even given them a conjunctive use like the French *que* and *qui*. The fact that the language had the power of changing the *internal relations* of Saxon shews that its influence was not superficial, as some assert, but pervaded the entire language, penetrating to its deepest recesses.