CHAPTER VII

THE VOWELS OF UNSTRESSED SYLLABLES

For the student who wishes to acquire some knowledge of the treatment of vowels in syllables devoid of stress during the Modern Period, it is a great advantage that the early writers on English pronunciation have avoided the question altogether. We are thus spared the labour of reading through, and comparing, a number of statements which, to judge by other parts of the work of these writers, would not have been very enlightening. We are even more grateful for the absence of endless discussions and explanations by more recent authorities of what the earlier writers meant or did not mean. Speaking generally, we may say that it is not until the eighteenth century that we find direct accounts of the pronunciation of unstressed vowels, and by that time we are in a position to know from other sources many at least of the principal facts. The eighteenth-century writers often describe the unstressed syllables by means of a rough and ready but quite intelligible phonetic spelling, and these transcriptions frequently establish, for the period in which they were made, pronunciations which we know had been in existence for centuries before.

The present chapter deals with the subject as from the fifteenth century. I have not attempted to follow the weakenings of vowels back into the M.E. period. My collection of material from M.E. sources, although not inconsiderable, is not yet by any means adequate for generalizations of value to be based upon it. Many of the phenomena here exhibited are no doubt much older than the fifteenth century. This is notably true of the weakening of the inflexional endings -ed, -es, -ep, -en to -id, -is, &c.

From the material contained in the following pages one may venture to formulate one or two statements of a general character.

(1) At least as early as the middle of the fifteenth century vowels in unstressed syllables were shortened, reduced, or confused, very much as in Colloquial English at the present time.

(2) This may be inferred from numerous occasional spellings which reveal either (a) a sound of an undefined character, different from that expressed by the traditional spelling, which the writer is undecided how to express, or (b) a definite sound different from that expressed by the traditional spelling.

(3) The spellings which indicate a reduction of the unstressed vowel are not used consistently by any writers, except in the case of such suffixes as -is, -id, &c., and even here the consistency is only relative.

(4) While a violent and definite departure from the traditional spelling, whether sporadic or habitual, must be taken to imply some change in
pronunciation, the adherence to the conventional spelling does not necessarily imply that no change has taken place. (N.B. The examples given illustrate, as a rule, only departures from the older spelling.)

(5) Varieties in spelling may express only indecision on the part of a writer in transcribing a sound (cf. (2), above); but they may also indicate the existence of more than one type of pronunciation.

(6) Different types of pronunciation in the same vowel may represent (a) the results of different conditions of stress in the same word, or (b) they may be due to different tendencies which coexisted among different classes of speakers.

(7) Examples of indecision in transcribing a vowel sound are:—

- el, transcribed in Cely Papers in four different ways in the same word, e.g. stapell, stapyll, stapal, stapul. Here possibly -ell and -yll represent approximately one and the same type of pronunciation, and -al, -ul another. The same confusion is found in the spelling of the unstressed ending -er. It is evident that already in the fifteenth century the vowels in -er, -ar, -or, -ur, -our were all levelled under one sound—[ər] or syllabic r.

(8) Examples of varieties due to different conditions of stress are:—

certin from M.E. certein: certayne, &c., from M.E. certēn; bättel from M.E. bätaille: and bättayl from M.E. bätaille; fortēn, fortin from M.E. fortée: fortune, present-day [ʃiːn], from M.E. fortēne; aventure from M.E. aventure: aventuré from M.E. aventūre; &c., &c.

(9) Examples of varieties due to different tendencies are:—

sesyn, reasyn compared with sesoun, resoun, &c. This difference of treatment of -on in unstressed syllables is still heard to-day, when some speakers pronounce pigeon [ˈpɪdʒɪn], others [ˈpɪdʒən]. The type represented above by sesyn, &c., has almost died out in Received Standard, although formerly the chief type, and has given place to that represented by resoun, &c., now [ɹzn]. Pigeon is perhaps the only word still commonly pronounced with [in], and this pronunciation is considered by many as old-fashioned.

(10) The differences which exist between the pronunciation of unstressed vowels at the present time, and that indicated by the spellings as existing in former centuries, are chiefly due to the adoption in recent times of a different type (cf. remarks on unstressed -on in (9), above), and not to new developments in changes of sound. These have hardly occurred since the late sixteenth century. Some of the pronunciations of to-day are due to the influence of the written form, and the recent efforts in some quarters to ‘restore’ the full forms of vowels in stressless positions, cf. the spelling-pronunciation [ˈpɒʊz] instead of the historical [ˈpɒps] of the one type, or [ˈpæps] of the other. The distribution of the different types among the various words in which the same original vowel occurs in an unstressed position, as well as the selection of the unstressed vowels in certain words for ‘restoration’, while in others the ancient historical reduced form is still pronounced, are matters, as it would seem, of arbitrary chance and the fashion of the moment.

I now pass on to give a brief summary of the actual changes which resulted from the weakening of vowels in unstressed syllables, so far as these can be gathered from the material, far from adequate, although not altogether contemptible, which I have collected and classified.
I may say here that, so far as I can see, the results are the same, provided a vowel is unstressed, no matter where it stands in relation to the principal stress of the word or breath-group in which it occurs. The nature of the surrounding consonants probably exerts some influence, but the present material does not suffice for formulating the conditions or nature of such influence, except in respect of vowels before -l, -n, and -r.

**Front Vowels** are raised: \( a = [\text{æ}] \) becomes \( e [\text{e}] \); this \( e \) levelled later under original \( e \) which becomes \( i \).

**Rounded Vowels** are unrounded

\[
\begin{align*}
&u \text{ and } o \text{ probably levelled under the same sound,} \\
&\text{(written } a) = [\text{a}] \text{ which becomes } [\text{æ}].
\end{align*}
\]

**Diphthongs**

\[
\begin{align*}
&oi \text{ becomes } i [i], \text{ written } e, \ i. \\
&ai (ei) \text{ (which had become } [\text{e}] \text{) result in a front vowel}
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
&\text{written } e \text{ or } i, \text{ probably } = [\text{i}].
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
&au, ou, \text{ monophthongized to } [o, o] \text{ which is unrounded to } [a] \\
&\text{written } a; \text{ this often fronted to } \text{a vowel written } e \text{ or } i (y).
\end{align*}
\]

There appear to be two quite different tendencies at work from early in the Modern period among different sections of speakers. One group tends to level all weak vowels under some front vowel, written \( i \) or \( e \); the other to level all weak vowels under the 'obscure' vowel \( [a] \) or some such sound, written variously \( a, o, u \). It is probably safe to infer that the symbols for old back or back-rounded vowels, \( a, o, u \), generally imply some sound corresponding to \( [a] \) at the present time, and that the symbols for front vowels—\( i, e \)—imply the kind of vowel now heard in the second syllable of *ladies*, here written \( [i] \), although it may have been the high-flat-slack vowel \( [i] \).

The two tendencies above referred to are specially observable in the treatment of vowels before -\( n \) and -l. One tendency results in developing and preserving the 'clear' vowel, so that we get \( [\text{in}, \text{il}] \) for earlier -en, -el, and even for -on (cf. (9), above, and pp. 271-2, 274-5, below). The other tendency results in \( [\text{an}, \text{al}] \), which are further weakened to syllabic \( n \) and / respectively as present-day *button, beaten, cradle, rebel* (Noun), &c. We know both from practical experience and from the records of the past of the existence of both these types, \( [\text{in}, \text{il}] \) and \( [\text{n}, \text{l}] \).

As regards the treatment of vowels in unstressed syllables before -r, although -yr, -ir are common spellings for old -er, it seems very doubtful whether the genius of the English language ever tolerated such a combination as \([r] \) in actual speech, at least finally. On the other hand such spellings as *fadr, remembr*, both fifteenth century, suggest that a syllabic \( [r] \) was pronounced. The various spellings *or, er, yr, ur, ar* for the same syllable \( er \) seem to imply a vowel which it was difficult to identify, probably \( [a, a] \). The 'murmur' vowel \( [a] \) probably developed quite early before -r, and \( [ar] \) was later reduced to syllabic \( [r] \). This in its turn was weakened and gave place to the present \( [a] \). We have apparently no confirmatory evidence from any living form of English of the existence of an \( [ir] \) type, and the records of the past are ambiguous.

After these general remarks I now pass to consider, as briefly as
possible, the details which are exhibited in the lists. The latter are for
the most part so arranged as to show the prevailing tendencies, so far as
these may be inferred by the particular kind of departure from the
conventional spelling in each century. I have tried to avoid needless
subdivision, but a certain amount, especially under the heading -a and -e
in unstressed syllables, seemed necessary and unavoidable.

THE UNSTRESSED VOWELS IN DETAIL.

In Unstressed Syllables.

(N.B. The reader of the following brief comments may refer, if he
please, to the lists, pp. 267-82, upon which the views here set forth are
based.)

The Suffixes.

ed. The suffix -ed in weak Prets. and P.P.'s appears as -id very
commonly in all kinds of texts throughout the fifteenth and sixteenth
centuries. The Adjective wretched appears with -id as early as 1451.
Even St. Editha, alongside of the Western -ud, has not a few -id endings
in Prets. and P.P.'s. This form -ud is no doubt the ancestor of the
present-day provincial or vulgar [ed]. It is evident that the [id] form,
now universal in polite speech, was established very early. Coote's
warning against -id proves the existence of the pronunciation in his day,
although such proof is quite superfluous. His statement that the pro-
nunciation is Scottish is sheer nonsense. He might as well have said
that it was Devonshire, and Norfolk, and London, and so on.

eth. The present pronunciation of this suffix [eth], which only survives
in Liturgical and Biblical language or in Poetry, was established in the
fifteenth century in a wide circle and over a large area.

ea. The present-day pronunciation [ez] was established beyond dis-
pute from the fifteenth century onwards. The old Western -us repre-
sents doubtless the type [az], which still exists as a provincialism and
vulgarism.

est. The [-ist] type was evidently as widespread during and since
the fifteenth century as among good speakers to-day. The spelling
intrust in the Verney Memoirs is the ancestor of present-day [intrast],
which is provincial. The more polite forms are [int(o)rist, intrest].
Every other form in the list might stand for the present pronunciation,
including Sir T. Elyot's haruist.

er. The early forms of -er as an ending point to at least two types,
[ør] and syllabic r. Is it possible that the -yr-spellings represent the
ancestor of the present-day vulgar pronunciation with a tense vowel?

Lady Sussex's spelling misirable stands, if we may draw any conclusion
from -ir-, for a type no longer heard. The present-day possibilities are
either [mizərəbl] or [mizərəbl].

en, em. The spellings suggest three types of pronunciation:
[in, on], and syllabic [n]. All three types exist in present-day polite
English, variously distributed. Of these [on, n] are perhaps the com-
monest. Still, most good speakers preserve [in] in—woollen, kitchen,
chicken, women, linen, Latin, rosin, &c. = [wuln, kifsən, tʃikən, wimin,
linin, rozin]. On the other hand we have [ən] or syllabic n in—golden, earthen, wooden, even, often, sudden, children, heaven, and in P. P.'s in -en, such as forgotten.

-em, as in solemn and 'em, is now usually [əm]. Note Sir R. Verney's solome, which doubtless expresses this pronunciation.

-ol. The early spellings show a preponderance of -yl forms, with a few -ul = [əl], and Sir Thos. More's Russel = syllabic l. This is the prevailing type at the present day, after consonants, whether in words like evil, devil, fossil, where [əl] is also heard, or in those spelt -le. It is probable that many speakers who wrote -yl in earlier centuries often pronounced [əl, ə]. After a vowel the best usage on the whole now favours [əl], as in cruel (cf. also forms from Verney Memoirs in lists, fuel, towel, vowel).

Other Suffixes and Endings containing -e-.

-less. Now always [lɪs] in Received Standard. This pronunciation is established in the fifteenth century by Marg. Paston's spelling harmlys. The provincial [ləs] and the spelling-pronunciation [lɛs] may often be heard.

-ness. Present-day [nəs]. I have not noted any spellings with -nis earlier than Queen Elizabeth, who makes frequent use of them. [ɪs] is also the normal pronunciation of -ess, as in mistress, &c.

-chester. The spelling Rochister of the Wentworth Papers, 1710, agrees with present-day usage in this and other similar names—Chichester [tʃɪʃɪsta], Manchester [mæntʃɪsta], &c.

-le(d)ge. Knowledge, college are pronounced [nəldʒ, kəldʒ] at the present time. This pronunciation of the weak vowel in the former word dales at least from the fifteenth century, that of the latter word I have not found recorded earlier than Gabriel Harvey. The 1482 spelling collateral of the Bury Wills corresponds to the present-day provincial [kəldʒ].

-et. This ending is pronounced [ɪ] after consonants, in covet, helmet, bullet, blanket, &c., but [æ] in diet. These conditions are expressed by the sixteenth-century spellings given in the lists.

e-. Unstressed e- followed by strong stress is now usually pronounced [i], as in estate, escape, elect, erroneous, &c. = [ɪstɪt, ɪskɪp, rɪkt, rɪˈmɒnɪ], &c. The spellings—fairly numerous in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries—ascape, astate, &c., apparently imply a pronunciation with [ə].

-a in Unstressed Syllables.

The early spellings, and even the late spellings of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries show a more widespread tendency to weaken a to [ə] than at present prevails in Received Standard. Many of the spellings, from each of the centuries, represent pronunciations which it is true still obtain in English, but only in Regional or Class dialects. The mere fact that a is weakened to a sound written i or e is not in itself surprising, when we consider that one of the sounds for which a stood was, in the fifteenth century, in many areas, especially in the E. Midlands and South-East, in process of being fronted. This process may well have begun
earlier in unstressed positions. It is most probable that an antecedent stage to the front vowel, written ə, or more often i, was [æ]. This was apparently raised to a sound intermediate between [e, i], and from this stage the differentiation into a full [i] on the one hand, or [ə] on the other, took place. Received Standard has now adopted the [ə] type in most of the cases illustrated in the lists. Attention may be drawn to the spelling Up- for Ap- quoted from Capgrave. This form shows that u in unstressed syllables was already unrounded, and that the symbol expresses [a] or [ə] when used for a vowel in this position.

I note first the points of agreement in type between the early spellings and present-day usage. Both agree in having [ə] in the following:—as when unstressed in sentence; cf. os in Cely Pprs.; -mas in Christmas, &c., cf. Machyn's form in -mus, and Lady Sussex's crismus in 1639; in -as, Thomas, &c., cf. Cary Verney's tomos in 1642; -an, musician, &c., cf. musition, Italization in Euphues; -ac as in stomach, cf. Gabr. Harvey's stummock.

Present-day usage agrees with the early spellings in having [i] for unstressed -a:—

-ange, messenger (M.E. messager), cf. fifteenth-century form messynger; -ae, in obstacle, character = [əbstəkl, kærɪkə], cf. obstacle, Verney Mem. 1647, and carecter, Wentw. Pprs.; -age in cottage, courage, marriage, advantage, message, &c. = [kJotɪd, kærɪdʒ, mærɪdʒ, ədvəntɪdʒ], cf. Lever's colinges which implies *colige, Lady Sussex's corige, Cranmer's and Roper's marriges, &c., and Mrs. Sherard's advantig. The pronunciation [ai'zi:k] still survives, indeed it is my own, but probably [ai'zək] (from the spelling) is now more usual. Note Baker's Isic for Isaac. Many speakers, including present writer, pronounce [dɪjkɪstə], with which compare Donkister in Verney Mem. 1665. I also say [əmbəsədə], cf. Cavendish's ambassiter, though many now pronounce [əmbəsədə]. As regards -ate, we say [praɪvət tʃəkələt], &c., cf. pryvii chockolet in Wentw. Pprs.

Present-day usage favours [ə] for old -a-, in the following words and their likes, where earlier spellings have i:—

-as, in unstressed positions = [az], but cf. es in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries; -an = [ən] in company, -land, -man, but cf. Machyn's company, Lady Sussex's compiny, and inglende, and Lady Rochester's Bridge-men, where we have [kæmpəni, ɪŋglænd, bridʒmən].

-as in purchase, Thomas = [pɑtʃəs, toʊməs] with which compare Gabr. Harvey's purchase, and Lady Sussex's tomis. I remember hearing [pɑtʃis] in my boyhood from excellent speakers who preserved the habits of an earlier generation.

-ac as in stomach = [stəmək], but cf. Anne Lee's stomicheurs in Verney Mem., and Baker's spelling stomick. I have heard the latter word so pronounced by very old speakers whose speech was merely old-fashioned though it contained no vulgarisms. At the present time [stəmɪk] survives chiefly in lower-class speech. In almanac we have 'restored' [æk] in final syllable. I have heard [ɔlmɪnɪk], cf. form in Cely Fprs.

-ant:—we now say [ɪnfənt] with which cf. C. Stewkley's infints in Verney Mem.; -ark in Southwark, now = [sədək], but cf. Baker's Southwick, probably = [səðɪk].
The spellings -er for -ar probably show no more than that -er and -ar were levelled under one form [ə(r)].

The only example where [e] is suggested for a where we now pronounce [ɪ] is passengers (earlier passager) in Cely Papers.

Initial a- followed by the strongest stress, which is now always [ə], as in annoyed, anoint, &c., was apparently sometimes weakened to [e] or [ɪ] (?) in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Cf. enoyd, entointed, &c., p. 275, below.

0 in Unstressed Syllables.

The early spellings indicate (1) that 0 when unstressed was unrounded, and (2) that in a large number of words, chiefly, though not exclusively, before -n, and -t in the same syllable, this unrounded vowel was fronted. The simple unrounding is expressed in the fifteenth-century spellings—dysabey, sa (= 'so'), abedyenses, Byshap, &c., and in the sixteenth century men a warre, opinions, tenne a clocke, &c., &c. This vowel, which was either [a] or [ə], has survived at the present time when we still say [əklɔk, mən ə wɔ, diʃəbər, brəp], though a rounded vowel is generally pronounced in obey, and often in opinion and obedience.

More interesting, and remarkable, are the fairly numerous forms of the fifteenth to the eighteenth century, in which a front vowel is clearly intended, although we now pronounce [ə] in Received Standard.

Taking first the words in which -on occurs finally, we find a considerable number of spellings of the fifteenth, sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries which point unmistakably to a front vowel, generally written -yn, -in, but also occasionally -en. Of this class the only ones which retain the old pronunciation in Received Standard at the present time are pigeon, widgeon, and even in these the usual [ən] is probably now more common. Several other words, however, retain [ɪn] in vulgar speech, e.g. wagon, ribbon, cushion, &c., though the schools are fast eliminating these old forms from the language altogether. As a boy I knew several old people whose English was the Received Standard of the beginning of last century, who pronounced [ɪn] in luncheon, puncheon, cushion, surgeon, dungeon, to my clear recollection, and possibly in other words also which I never heard from them, or which I have now forgotten. I remember noticing at the time the difference between these old people and myself in respect of the words just mentioned. I notice that Baker gives inin as the pronunciation of onion. Whether this was not a vulgarism already in his day it is impossible to say, but it apparently represents a pronunciation [əniŋ] which I know is used at the present moment by at least one man, a labourer, in Oxfordshire. At an earlier period of my life I remember hearing [vrˈbɪnz, ˌpædɪn, ˌpædin] from domestics. Passing to words of other classes, I am inclined to believe that I have heard [prəvɪst] comparatively recently, but I am unable to indicate the position of the speaker.

Faggot is still pronounced [fəɡət] by some vulgar speakers (cf. Lady Hobart's fagets, 1663), and carrots is [kærəts] in the same circles.

Unstressed -o- in the middle of words is now either [ə] or [ɔ], e.g. accommodate, &c., but cf. Lady Sussex'sacomidayson and sorifull. In the last word 'sorry' may have influenced the form, now [ˈsɔriful].
Unrounding of Unstressed $\textit{u}$ and $\textit{ou} = \textit{u}$.

The unrounding of this vowel perhaps took place earlier in weak than in stressed syllables. It can hardly be doubted that in such spellings as $\textit{apon}$, $\textit{sapose}$, $\textit{anche}$, a vowel without lip-rounding is indicated. Unstressed $\textit{o}$ and $\textit{u}$ were levelled under a single vowel, which ultimately became [ə]. So far as I know, there is no evidence to show that $\textit{u}$ in unstressed syllables was fronted after being unrounded. The spellings $\textit{faver}$, $\textit{semer}$ (Seymour), &c., of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries merely indicate that $\textit{our}$ together with $\textit{er}$ had become [ə(r)].

Unrounding of French $\textit{u} = [y]$ in Unstressed Syllables.

This process is a simple one, and its results are repeatedly traceable in the collection of spellings given below from documents of the fifteenth, sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries. On the forms in $\textit{-ir}$ ($\textit{feulir}$ 'future', &c.) and in $\textit{-in}$ ($\textit{fortin}$ 'fortune'), see remarks below, pp. 277-8, at the end of the lists.

The present-day types $[\textit{f5tjan}, \textit{ventja}, \textit{vaeljw}, \textit{repjwte}][\textit{jn}]$, &c., which have taken the place of the old forms $[\textit{f5tin}, \textit{vento}, \textit{vael}, \textit{repite}[\textit{jn}]]$, &c., demand a few words. It is possible to explain all these new forms as due to the influence of the spelling, but I am inclined to agree with Jespersen that this cannot be the explanation in all cases. I have already propounded an explanation of the double forms (Short Hist. of English, § 265, and in Mod. Lang. Teaching, June 1915) which still appears to me to be sound. It is briefly this. The only normal forms developed when there was no stress on the $\textit{-u}$, are those in $i$, or its subsequent developments [ər] and sometimes [ən], by the side of [in]. Forms such as $[\textit{f5tjon}, \textit{ventjo}, \textit{vaelju}]$, &c., are due to a different type of accentuation, in which $\textit{u}$ was not, as a matter of fact, unstressed at all, but fully stressed—$\textit{fortune}$, $\textit{valu}$, $\textit{aventure}$, under which circumstances French $\textit{u}$ became $\textit{iu}$ [jʌ] in Early Modern English, as in $\textit{duke}$, $\textit{virtue}$ (from $\textit{vertue}$), &c., &c.

This type coexisted with the other, possibly into the early sixteenth century. At any rate its descendants, so far as the vowel is concerned, survived, and, after $\textit{fortune}$ had already become $\textit{fortin}$, $\textit{fortune}$ survived in the form $\textit{fortian}$, although by the beginning of the sixteenth century, if not earlier, this type, too, had very likely been assimilated to the commoner (English) mode of accentuation, so that it was pronounced $\textit{fortiune}$. The combination $\textit{-ti}$ became [ʃ] (cf. p. 293, below); hence we got [ʃɔrtʃən, ʃɔrtʃən, ʃɔrtʃən]. This theory, which is based on known facts, explains the present-day pronunciation of all the words of this class. The adoption of this type wholesale in Received Standard may well have been encouraged by the fact that it seemed to agree better with the traditional spelling. In some words analogy helped, e.g. $\textit{reputation}$ on the pattern of $\textit{repute}$.

While it so happens that I have found a fair number of spellings which show the unrounding of French $\textit{u}$, it stands to reason that in the vast majority of cases the traditional spelling is preserved. This has no value for our purpose, since many who pronounced 'fortin' from habit and training continued to write $\textit{fortune}$, &c., and while we may be certain as
to which type is intended when the former spelling is used, we cannot tell whether the latter really implies that the writer pronounced the word with the accent on the final syllable, and therefore also pronounced the vowel in that syllable as [jʊ] or not.

There are, however, among the forms collected in the lists a few whose spelling, while departing from the tradition, seems to imply a type of pronunciation derived from the accentuation of the final syllable. Such are Queen Elizabeth's fortun-, Lady Verney's pictuer, Mrs. Eure's creuers, and Mrs. Sherard's fortewen. I regard these spellings as definitely expressing [jʊ] in the final syllable, or at least the type of pronunciation derived from this. It is probable that Queen Elizabeth, and still more so that the Verney ladies, already pronounced [ˈfɔːtɪn], [ˈpɪkta(ɹ)r], [ˈkrɪtja(ɹ)z], that is to say that they used the same type, and pronounced it in the same way, as we do now.

On the other hand, if any importance is to be attached to the statements of the grammarians, it seems certain that during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries [ˈpɪkta, ˈkrɪtə], &c., were chiefly in vogue. It is enough, however, if we can establish the coexistence of the other type in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, as this would go far to prove that our modern pronunciation is not wholly new and inspired by the spelling, but rather that it is the survival, now in universal use, of a type which has always existed alongside of that which has now been discarded.

The forms voluptuous, Wilson and Cavendish; verteous, veritious, Roper and Lady Wentworth; sumptuous, &c., Cavendish, may owe their e or i to confusion of the suffixes -uous, -ious, and -eous. That can neither be definitely proved nor disproved. It is quite certain, however, that vertious is a perfectly normal development—vertie becomes [vərti], veritious becomes [ˈvərtiəs].

Lady Wentworth's yousyal 'usual' [ˈjũziəl] seems an excellent example of the unrounding process.

The process also affects French unstressed u when final, and this is well illustrated by Machyn's newys 'nephews', and by Lady Sussex's valy 'value' (Vb.), and Lady Wentworth's valyed. It is wonderful what education has done for us nowadays; newy 'nephew' hardly survives outside the pages of comic writers, and valy, I suppose, is now never heard, and has ceased even to be a traditional vulgarism.

The Diphthongs.

ai, or ei (=ai). When this diphthong stood before l, n, as in travail, bättail, counsel, certain, villain, &c., it was first reduced to [aɪ], giving -il, -in, and these combinations either remain or are further weakened to syllabic [l, n] or to [aɪ, an] respectively. Thus we say either [ˈkauənsl] or [ˈkauənsəl] and either [ˈsænt] or [ˈsætn]. On the other hand the early spelling battle has left no choice in pronunciation even to the most fastidious. We have differentiated travail at the present time in spelling, pronunciation, and meaning, travel and travail being now felt as quite independent. The pronunciation of travail as [ˈtreəvəl], while partly due to the spelling, may also be accounted for by assuming that it represents the form which would naturally occur in the verb when this was followed by an inflexional
syllable, with the accent on the second syllable—*travaille* (N.). The form so accentuated would survive the weakening undergone by *travaille*. Later on the accent was shifted back to the first syllable without further altering the now unstressed vowel.

Before other consonants the unstressed syllable is [i] in Received Standard, [a] in other forms, cf. [pælɪs, pælæs].

**oi.** Not much comment is needed beyond pointing out that we have now "restored" the diphthong *oi* in nearly all words except *chamois* leather, and the family name *farvis* (from *servoise*).

It is satisfactory to find *shamme gloves* in Sir Ralph Verney's letter of 1685.

We learn from Spenser's spelling how the name of the author of the *Steele Glasse* was pronounced by his contemporaries. The form *Gaskin* still survives as a name by the side of the more usual *Gascoigne*, pronounced [gæskoɪn].

Our present pronunciation of *turquoise* (*təkwɔz, təkwɔɪz*) is shown to be quite recent. The only possible lineal descendant of Milton's *turkis* would be [təkwɪs].

The early forms of this word, as well as that of *tortoise*, show the two tendencies which are found in nearly all unstressed syllables in English—towards [ɪz] and towards [æs]. The present-day usage favours [æs] in *porpoise* and *tortoise*, but we may note Gregory's *porpys*, and the two types *tortes* and *tortus* in the Verney Memoirs. We may regard [tɔritoɪz, pɔpɔɪz] as mere schoolmaster's pronunciations. It is possible that *tortes*, &c., should be placed in the list illustrating the unrounding of French *u*, as there is a M.E. *tortuce*, cf. Jespersen 9. 332. The form quoted from *Euphues* at any rate shows that the ending might equally well have been -ois. There may have been two forms, one in -uce and one in -ois. The early spellings might represent the reduction of either of these.

**Note.** This process is apparently identical with that assumed to have taken place in Primitive Aryan, whereby *ei, oi* appear as *i* in the ‘Reduced Grade’, cf. Gk. *oί* and *o*- corresponding to Gothic *wait, witi* from *woid-, *widi*.

The Pronunciation of the Vowels in Unstressed Syllables.

Examples of Occasional Departures from Traditional Spelling.

**Flexional Syllables.**

15th Century.

-**ed** (Pret. and P. P.), &c.

St. Editha (1420). clepud P. P., 50; dwellyd, 46 (corrected from *dwell*), scomfytyd, 67; y-cronyd, 60.

Archbp. Chichele (1418). assentyd, Ellis i. 1. 5.

Card. Beaufort (c. 1420). belovid, Ellis, Letter, i. 1. 8.


Bp. Pecok. feelid, schewid, strengthid, hurtid, 1. 110.

Sir T. Cumberworth's Will (Lincs. 1451). L. D. D., wrechid, 45. 6; accordid, 46. 4; offendid, 46. 13.
Marg. Paston. gidit, ii. 241; pardonyd P. P., i. 115; -yd, the usual form of this suffix.
Gregory’s Chronicle. i-callyde, 61, i-halowyde, 65.
Capgrave (Chronicle). punchid, 291.
Realde of Sustris Menouresses (c. 1450). biloid, 81. 1, encresid, 81. 7, blessid, 81. 12, &c., &c.
Bury Wills, 1480. blessid, fotyd, 23, steryd, 15, &c., &c.
Cely Papers (Essex, 1475–88). -yd by far commoner than -ed, e.g. depertyd, 31; blessyd, 33; whebelowyd, 34; mendyt, 35; alectyd, 162; derectyd, 274.

Bokenam. hundryd, 980.

16th Century.

Dr. Knight (Bp. of Bath and Wells), 1512, to Wolsey. -id, -yd more frequent than -ed.
Sir Rauf Verney’s Will (1525). aduisz’d, bequethid.
Anne Boleyn (1528). preservyd, Ellis i. 1. 306.
R. Pace to Wolsey (Ellis 3.1; 16 Hen. VIII). contentidde, 195.
Berners’ Froissart (1523–5). (Generally -ed), also -id, -yd.
Cavendish (Life of Wolsey). providyd, commandyd, &c. (also -ed).
Latimer (Sermons). Generally -ed.
Thos. Lever’s Sermons (1550). Nearly always -ed.
Q. Elizabeth (Letters; Transl.). Generally -id; -ed rarer; preventid, acquaintid, L. 3.
Euphues. Very conventional in spelling, unstressed syllable always -ed.
Puttenham. -ed, counted, &c.

17th Century.

Coote, English Schoolmaster, 1627. ‘Take heed that you put not (id) for (ed) as unitid for united which is Scottish’, p. 27.

Flexional Syllables.

M.E. -ep = -ith. 15th Century.

1420 Palladius. wexith, 51. 193 (Pl.).
1443 Coventry Leet Book. holdith, 47, streechith, 50, holdyth, 50, &c., &c.
THE SUFFIXES -eth, -es

1443 Bokenam. always -yth.
1447-50 Shillingford's Letters. menyth, p. 12.
Marg. Paston. sendyth, faryth, &c.
1450 R. of Susris Menouresses, ðey etith, 111. 17; reedith, 116. 17 and 20; singip, 110. 9.
147- Sir J. Fortescue. makyth, 109; praisith, 110.
1470, &c. Cely Papers. camyth, 146.
1480 Bury Wills. foluith, 16, longith, 16, stretchith (Pl.), 20.
1494 Cr. of Dk. of York Knt. of Bath. Letters and Papers, endentith, 1. 388, purposith. justithe, 389, gevith (Pl.), 398.

16th Century.
1513 Sir R. Wingfield to Hen. VIII. dwellith, Ellis, Letters, ii. 1 167, holdith, ibid.
1525 R. Pace to Wolsey. makyth, Ellis, Letters iii. 1. 196.
1533 Sir J. Digby's Will (Leic.). apperith, Linc. Dioc. Docs. 142. 34.
1560 Cavendish, L. of Wolsey. extendyth, 14, tornyth, assuryth, 15, &c., &c.
1573-80 Letter Bk. of Gabriel Harvey. askith, 16.
Q. Elizabeth (Letters to J. VI). bestoith; burnith, Transl. 13.

-88.

15th Century.
c. 1420 Siege of Rouen. clerkys.
1420 St. Editha. monnys, 8; goddis (Possess.), 1056; thingus, 7;
myjtus (Pl.), 2.
1443 Cov. Lett. mannys, 51, croftys, 47, fellys, 49.
1450 Rev. Sustr. Men. massis, 110. 16; versis, 111. 7.
147- Cely Papers. -ys far outnumber other forms.

16th Century.
1512 Dr. Knight (Chaplain to Hen. VIII). fortressis, Ellis ii. 1. 193.
16 Hen. VIII, R. Pace to Wolsey. Hostagis, Ellis iii. 1. 195; causis, ibid. 196.
1530 Sir T. Elyot's Gouernour. princis, 1. 44; horsis, 1. 63; sicknessis, 1. 169; placis, 1. 45, &c., &c.
1532 Cranmer. bargis, Ellis i. 2. 36.
1560 Cavendish, L. of Wolsey. horsis, -ys, 7; crossis, 35.
Q. Elizabeth. scusis, Letters, 109; practisis, ibid. 60.

17th Century.
1629 Mrs. Wiseman. necis (Pl.), Verney Papers 144.
1642 Mrs. Eure in Verney Mem. ii. justisis, p. 86 (1642); taxis 91; Mrs. Isham, ibid., purssis; Pen. Verney, expenses, 354 (1644).
270 THE VOWELS OF UNSTRESSED SYLLABLES

18th Century.

1705-11 Lady Wentworth. Jars's, St. Jamsis, 47 (Possess.); glassis, III; oringis (Pl.), 107; freezis, III.

-est in Unstressed Syllables.


-est.

15th Century.

Cr. of Dk. of York a Kn. of Garter (Letters and Papers ii), 1490, fairyst (Superl.), p. 389.
Will of Richard Welby (Lincs., 1465), L. D. D. eldist, 123. 2.

16th Century.

Anne Boleyn (1528). humblyst, Ellis i. 1. 305.
Lord Berners' Froissart (1529). wekyst, i. 161.
Sir T. Elyot's Gouernour (1533). kepist, 2. 76; askidist, 2. 76; haruist, 2. 256.
Gabriel Harvey (Letter Bk., 1578-80). dearist, 13; deadist, 12; surist, 14; hardist, 14; haruist, 14; honist, 14, &c., &c.
Q. Elizabeth (Letters and Transl.). expertist, L. 29; largist, 50; fullist, Transl. 4; hottist, Transl. 97.

17th Century.

Anne Poynts, Alleyne Pprs. honyst, 31 (1605).
Verney Memoirs, vol. ii. eldist, Marg. V.'s Will, 18 (1639); grettist, Cary V., 71 (1642); sadist, ibid.; greatist, 121, Lady Sussex; also intrust 'interest', M. V.'s Will, p. 18.
Mrs. Basire. greatist, 140 (1658).

18th Century.


-er.

15th Century.

Bokenam. afyr, Pr. 54, &c.; phylosophyr, Pr. 54; mynystyr, Marg. 978; lengur, Ann. 438; wondurful, Ann. 641.
Marg. Pasion. fadr, i. 544; massangr, ii. 390; remembr, ii. 419.
Bury Wills. oovyr, 15; fadir, modir, 29; powdyr, 15; anothir, 17; afir, 17; bettyr, 20; tymbyr, 20, &c., &c.; also preyours 'prayers', 21 (1463); soupar 'supper', 21.
Gregory's Chron. oovyr.
Fortescue. remembr, 123, 124; vndr, 135; but also afir, undir, passim.
THE ENDINGS -er, -en

Caxton (Jason). murdre, 12. 35, 36; watre, 78. 5; vndre, 96. 21; wriars. 3. 22; helpars, 13. 31.
Cely Papers. bettyr, 6; nwmbyr, 33; ovyr, 6; dowttyr, 105; remembyr, 28; lettyrs, 33; mannor 'manner', 69; annsor, 78; sumor, 9; octobor, 21; dynar, 76; manar, 17; wryngar, 7; finar, 30; answare, 8; brocur, 24.

16th Century.
Q. Elisabeth. sistar, Ellis i. 2. 163–4 (1549); bettar, Letters to James VI, 13; murdar, ibid. 19.

17th Century.
In middle of word:—misirable, Lady Sussex, Verney Mem. ii. 88.


St. Editha. y-writon P. P., 367; lokedone, 285, throngedone, 461; mournedone, 461, burydone, 462; prayden, 287, putten, 1880, deden, 1888, &c.
Bokenam. oftyn, Fr. 205; Inf. in -yn.
Marg. Paston. eronds, i. 201; Infinitives:—a?kyn, i. 49; heryn, i. 67; getyn, i. 68; tellyn, i. 68; sellyn, i. 69; Pres. Pl.:—owyn, i. 68; Pret. Pl.:—ze badeyn, i. 69; zedyn, i. 70 (z = 3); haddyn, i. 110.
Bury Wills. gravyr, 15; euyn, 19 (Adv.); wretyn, 19; opynly, 18; erthin, 22. (Also -en forms.)
Shillingford. aunsion, 10.
Pecok. thousind, i. 215.
Rewle Sustr. Men. opunli, 100. 22; opynli, 110. 30; songoun P. P., 105. 7.
Sir T. Cumberworth's Will (Lincs., 1451), L. D. D. opyn, 45. 8; kechyn, 49. 12, 24.
Fortescue. writun, 130, gotun, 137.
Cely Papers. wryttyn P. P., 35; gevyn, 26; hosyn (N.), 28; lynyn (N.), 200; happon, 30; hofton 'often', 81.


16th Century.
State of Ireland (St. Pprs., Hen. VIII. i (1515)). waypyn 'weapon', 18.
Lord Berners' Froissart. havyn, 1. 33; opyn, passim.
Sir Thos. More's Letters. Ellis i. 2; hevyn, 52.
Thos. Lever's Sermons. chikynnes, 56.
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Cavendish, L. of Wolsey. opyn, 15; tokyn, 19; hosyn, 88; rysyn, 116; Latten 'Latin', 71.
Gabr. Harvey (Letters). chickins, 31; tokins, 150.
Q. Elizabeth. heauin 'heaven', Transl. 61.

17th Century.
Cary Verney. takin (P. P.), V. Mem. ii. 70 (1642).
Mrs. Isham. childrin, V. Mem. ii. 220 (1645); suddnly, ibid. 200 (1644).
Mrs. Eure. wimin (Pl.), V. Mem. ii. 86 (1642).

18th Century.
Lady Strafford. kitching, Wentw. Pprs. 540.

19th Century.
John Kemble said sentimint, innocint, conshince according to Leigh Hunt, Autobiogr. i, p. 180.

15th Century.
Bokenam. appyltre, Ann. 441; lytyl, Pr. 55, &c.
Marg. Paston. tempill, i. 81; unkyll, i. 202.
Bury Wills. litil, 20; bokyll, 16; nobil, 17; candylstikke, 19;
pepil, 19; symplil, 21; stepyl, 19; ladyl, 23; tharchangill, 62.
Caxton (Jason). sadyl, 7. 34; sadle (Inf.), 11. 29; liil, 13. 22, &c.;
nobole, 12. 1, noble, 12. 4, &c.
Cely Papers. myddyl, 34; saddyl, 34; stapyll, 5; craddyll, 157;
medell, 11; stapell, 6; fardel, 71; stapal, 4; stapul, 77.

16th Century.
Shelton's Magnyfycence. startyl, sparkyl, 741; dyvyls, 944; devyll, 941.
Sir Thos. More (Letters, Ellis i. 1). Sir John Russil, 205.
Machyn. postyl 'apostle'; castyl 'castle', 11.

17th Century.
Doll Leake. cruilty, V. Mem. ii. 213 (1644).

-e in Unstressed Syllables.
15th Century.
-most. 1447-50. Shillingford. utmyst.

1 For discussion of -en, -on reduced to syllabic -n, see Appendix III, p. 401. &c.
REDUCTION OF -e- IN VARIOUS ENDINGS 273

16th Century.

-ness. Q. Elizabeth. kindnis, Letters 40; wekenis, L. 41; happinis, L. 50, &c., &c.; darkenis, Transl. 4; businis, Transl. 126.

17th Century.


18th Century.


15th Century.

-lege (-leche) and original -lege.


-et. 16th Century.


-ledge (earlier -leche). 17th Century.
Betty Verney. acknowliges, Verney Mem. iv. 21 (1661).

-et. Lady Lambton. interprilt, Basire Corresp. 80 (1649).

18th Century.

-et. Wentworth Papers. bullits, 81; blanckilt, 62. Initial et. astate 'estate', Bokenam, Pr. Marg. 877; Fortescue, 143; Gregory, 132; Elyot, passim; Berners, passim; alectyd, Cely Pprs. 162; ascuse 'excuse', Cely Pprs. 9; ascapyn 'escape', Bokenam, Marg. 877; ascape, Lord Berners, i. 72; aronyous 'erroneous', Machyn, 81.

-a + consonants. 15th Century.

-sco. Will. Paston, Jun. stomechere, Paston Letters, iii. 237 (1478); Cely Papers. almyneke, 156.

-as Cely Papers. os 'as', i. 30; Cr. Duke of York. ys = as—for as moche ys (= 'as') at so noble feast, &c., 389.
THE VOWELS OF UNSTRESSED SYLLABLES

-ave. John Russe. Seynt Oliffe's, Paston Letters, ii. 112 (1462).
-ap'. Capgrave's Chron. Uphoweil, 96 (= Ap-).
-a-. Bury Wills. testament, 15. 43 (1463).

16th Century.

-Archebp. Cranmer (Letters). particularly, Ellis i. 2. 172 (1549).
-Lyly, Euphues. particularus, 234.
-Machyn, secretery, 10.
-Spenser, Pres. State of Ireland. schollers, 626. 2.
-a-. Cavendish, L. of Wolsey. ambassiter, 7.
-a-. Machyn. Lancoster, 244.
-an-. Machyn. company, 303.
-Euphues. musition, 121, Italianteled, 314.
-as, -as. es = as, Sir Thos. More's Letters, Ellis ii. 1; such entreprises es shold if they mought, &c., 289.

17th Century.

-ant. infints. C. Stewkley, V. Mem. iii. 433 (1656).
-an-. compiny. Lady Sussex, V. Mem. ii. 133; inglende, Lady Sussex, V. Mem. ii. 88 (1642).
-aster. Donkister. Verney Mem. iv. 121; Lady Elmes (1665).
-ac. stomichers, Anne Lee, V. Mem. ii. 235 (1646); obsticle, Sir R. Verney, Mem. ii. 357 (1647); carictor, C. Stewkley, Mem. iv. 226.
-mas. crismus, Lady Sussex, Verney Pprs. 205 (1639); mickelmust, M. Falkiner, V. Mem. ii. 52 (1642); Doll Leake, crismus, V. Mem. iii. 287 (1656).
-as-. Sir tomos Chike, Lady Sussex, Verney Mem. ii. 153 (1643); Sir tomos, Cary Verney, V. Mem. ii. 68 (1642).
-a-. contrydicting, ibid.

18th Century.

-ac-. stomick, Isaac = Isaac, Baker, Rules for True Spelling (1724); carecter, Wentw. Pprs. 50.
-ave. (St.) Olive = St. Olave, Jones (1701). p. 59.
-able. 'Sounded abusively', ibid in Constable, Dunstable, Jones, p. 59.
-age. 16th Century.  
Archbp. Cranmer, Letters. marriages, Ellis i. 2. 36 (1533).  
Roper’s L. of More (1556). marriages, xlv. 10.  
Thos. Lever’s Sermons. coltingers, 82.  
John Alleyne. Alleyne Pprs., marriage, 15, incurriech ‘encourage’, 16 (159-7); Ph. Henslow in Alleyne Memoirs, spenge spinach, 28 (c. 1593).

17th Century.  
corige ‘courage’, Lady Sussex, ii. 38 (1641), disadvantige, mesege; advantige, Mrs. Sherard, iii. 317 (1657) (all in Verney Memoirs); vicaridge, Dr. Basire, 303 (1613).  
Saucidg and cabbidg are mentioned by Cooper.  

Initial a-. 15th and 16th Centuries.  
Cely Papers, enoyd ‘ annoyed’, 106; Elyot, enointed, 2. 235; Ascham, emonges, Tox. 37.

o in Unstressed Syllables. 15th Century.  
St. Editha. caren ‘ carrion’, 4328.  
Cely Papers. questyans, 153; reessenabull, 74; rekenyng, 34; resenably, 14.

-og. Marg. Paston. dysabey, i. 252; sa mych, ii. 308.  
Cely Papers. abedyensses, 69.


16th Century.  
-on. Dr. Knight (Chaplain to Hen. VIII). reasyn ‘ reason’ (1512), Ellis ii. i. 203.  
Rede me, &c. (1529). mutten ‘ mutton’.  
Richard Layton to Lord Cromwell (1538). Marten Colege (= Merton), Ellis ii. 2. 60.  
Thos. Pery (1539). commyshin, Ellis ii. 2. 140.  
Covendish, L. of Wolsey. waggans, 88.  
Bishop Latimer. dungen, Seven Serm. (1549), 119.  
Lady Hungerford (1569). prysin, 255; passiane, ibid. 256.  
Gabriel Harvey’s Letter Bk. (1573-80). duggin ‘dudgeon’, 29; to reckin, 16.  
Edm. Spenser. scutchin, F. Q., Bk. iii. 7. 30.
THE VOWELS OF UNSTRESSED SYLLABLES

John Alleyne, Alleyne Pprs. (159-?). *posshe*ne 'portion', 16; *fashenges* 'fashions', 16.

Sir Thos. Smith (1583). *recken*, Republ. 76.
of. Lord Berners' *Froissart*. men a warre, i. 156.


Gabr. Harvey's Letters. seaven a clocke, 72; tenne a clocke, 129.

Machyn. *apinions*, 81.

17th Century.


Verney Memoirs.
parden, Mall V., ii. 381 (1647); surgin 'surgeon', Pen. V., iii. 201 (1657), ribins, Doll Leake, iv. 66 (1664); fashing, Mrs. Edm. V., iv. 71 (1664); prisiner, Sir R. V., ii. 122. Lady Verney has the inverted spelling *reasons* for raisins, ii. 285 (1647).

-ord. sorifull, Lady Sussex, ii. 121.

-ot.acom»dasyon, Lady Sussex, ii. 153; and Mrs. Basire, *opportunity*, 104 (1651), *abay* 'obey', ibid. 135 (1654); Sir Arlandoe Bridgmen, Lady Rochester, iii. 466 (1660).

-ort. fagets, Lady Hobart, iv. 46 (1663); Pigit (Piggot), Pen. V., Lady Gardiner, iv. 327 (1685); Charret (3), Edm. V., iv. 397 (1687).

17th and early 18th Century.

Preposition on unstressed.
She sent a man a purpos, Lady B. Harley, 29 (1638); a (= on) Satterday, Later V. Letters, i, 48 (1696).

*o* purpos, Lady Wentworth Papers, 46 (1705); abroad a Munday, ibid. 41 (1705).

18th Century.


Peter Wentworth. *beckinged* 'beckoned', W. Pprs. 108 (1710); Lady Wentworth, Comten 'Compton', W. Pprs. 98 (1709); Baker, 1724, sturgin, dungin 'dungeon', punchin 'puncheon', flaggin 'flagon', cooshin, carrin 'carrion', inin 'onion'.

-ot. Jones. chariot, p. 45; somewhat sounded *som'at* (= [samat]).


-oard. cubberd, Jones, 33.

Early Forms of Cushion.
It is doubtful how far the forms of this word which end in -in are to be regarded as weakenings from -on-. Both endings may have been in use from an early period.

Bury Wills (1463)—*kussowmes, cussowhons*, 23; Sir Thos. Elyot's Will—*cushyns, 311*; Thos. Pery—*kusching*, Letter, Ellis ii. 2. 50, 1539; Cavendish, Life of Wolsey—*cushows*, 16, *cushens*, 65; Knaresborough Wills—*kwhissinges*, 29 (30 Hen. VIII); 'Wm. Baker (1725)—*cooshin.*
REDUCTION OF FRENCH u TO i OR ø

French u in Unstressed Syllables.

15th Century.

-ur. to paster, St. Ed. 3767 (c. 1420); moister, Palladius (1420) 29.
-ur. aventer, Cely Papers 5, the venter, C. P. 6.
-un. comyne, Shillingford Papers (1447-50); comynlaw, Shillingford 40; comyned togeder, 12, comyners, comeners, Gregory's Chron. 64.
-ut. savecondyte, C. P. 45 (-conde, ibid. 163); condytte, Gregory 71 ('conduit'); byskitt, C. P. 182; mynyte 'note'. Statement concerning Edm. de la Pole (1501), Letters and Papers i. 147.
-us. letuse, Bk. of Quint. 22.

16th Century.

-un. comyne (Vb.) (1503), Negotiations of Ambassadors, Letters and Papers i. 205, &c., &c.: comycngcasion, Wolsey to Hen. VIII, L. and P. i. 446; myssesforten, Machyn's Diary 139 (c. 1550).
Also:—fortynet, Q. Elizabeth, Lttrs. to J. VI. 27.
-ur. unscript/rlye, Latimer's Sermons, Arber, 7. 48; jointer, E. of Bath, Ellis, Letters ii. 2. 157; venterous, venteror, Machyn 67, 161; jointer, Roper's L. of Sir T. More (1556), xliii. 18; venterous, Euphues, Arber, 39; mannering (the ground), Wilson, Arte of Rhet., Oxford Ed. 53; toterting, Shakespeare (First Fol.), Titus Andron.; John Alleyn, gointer 'jointure', Alleyne Pprs. 16 (1593?).
-ous. vertous, Roper's L. of More (1556), vi. 29; voluphteous, Wilson 73; voluptuous, Cavendish, L. of Wolsey 116; sumptuously, 3; sumptious, ibid. 25; tortious, Spenser, F. Q., Bk. vii. 7. 14.

17th Century.

-ur. Verney Memoirs. ventarous, Cary Verney, ii. 70 (1642); jointer, Mrs. Isham, ii. 74 (1642); venter (Noun), Mrs. L., ii. 203 (1643); ventir, Lady Warwick, iii. 313 (1657); feutir, Mrs. Sherard, iii. 324 (1657); futer, Lady Hobart, iv. 66 (1664). Milton writes venter (vb.), Trin. MS. Com. 228 (1637). Cooper says picture = pick't her, and the pairs stricture and stricter, ordure and order, gesture and jester are sounded alike.
Also:—picktuer, Lady V.'s Will, ii. 18 (1639); cretuers, Mrs. Eure, ii. 96; lesuer, Lady Sussex, ii. 31 (1641).
-une. misfortin, Cary V., ii. 70 (1642); fortune, Mrs. Isham, ii. 220 (1645); fortin, Pen. V., ii. 353 (1644); unfortunate, Cary V., iii. 439 (1659); fourtin, Lady Hobart, iv. 56 (1664); fortune, fortin, Mrs. Isham, iv. 108 (1663).
Also:—fortewen, forwen, Mrs. Sherard, iv. 16 (1661).
-ue. miracflous, Edm. V., iv. 233 (1677); contiñial, W. Roades (Steward), iii. 234 (1655).
-u. menishone, ii. 56, 'munition'.
-v. valy (Vb.), Lady Sussex, ii. 87 (1642), 'to value'; neuie 'nephew'
Mrs. Basire, 142 (1655); a nagy 'ague', Mrs. Isham, Verney Mem. i. 288 (1639). Cooper (1685) says volley and value are sounded alike (= [vælɪ]).
THE VOWELS OF UNSTRESSED SYLLABLES

18th Century.

-u-. Lady Wentworth. vertuous, vallyed, Wentw. Pprs. 52; youyal, 84, 'usual', ibid. 84.

-une. Goldsmith, 'She Stoops to Conquer', Act ii. Tony Lumpkin:
   'If I'm a man, let me have my fortin.'

-ure. *She Stoops to Conquer*, Act ii. Tony Lumpkin:
   '
   If I'm a man, let me have my forlin.'

Back Vowels in Unstressed Syllables.

-ite. Shakespeare (First Foi.). Muscouits (rhymes wills), L. Lbr's Lost; Lady Wentworth, infenitt.

ile. Cavendish, Life of Wolsey, fertill, 11; Shakesp. (First Foi.), stirrill 'sterile', First Pt., Hen. IV, 4. 1.

-meal. Dr. Denton, oatmell 'oatmeal', Verney Mem. iii. 209 (1657); Wm. Baker, Rules for True Spelling, &c. (1723) also gives the pronunciation of this word as oimell, in this case apparently implying also a shortening of the vowel in the first syllable.

night. Cary Stewkle, senet, Verney Mem. iii. 434 (1656); fortinet, Mrs. Basire 132 (1654); (Roger) L'Estrange his Appeal, that day sennet 'se'nnight', 56 (1681).

Shortening of Vowels in Final Unstressed Syllables.

-a/. apon, Shillingford 6; Fortescue 123; Gregory 107, 238, 259; Cely Pprs. 14, 47 (twice), 203; Machyn 12.

-oun; un. Swythan 'Swithun', St. Editha 188; anethe 'hardly' (O.E. anèbes), Bokenam, Marg. 971; Aryndelle, Gregory 101.

-mouth J. Paston Jun., Yermeth, Paston Letters ii, 100 (1462).

-our. Gregory, faverynge, 134; Cely Pprs., favorabull, 137; Ascham, unsauery, Tox. 76; Machyn, Semer, 27 (= Seymour); Mall Verney, favor, V. Mem. ii. 381 (1647).

-ous. Ph. Henslow, greavesly, Alleyne Memoirs 28, c. 1593; disadvan-

-tages, Lady B. Harley, 30 (1639); legis, Mall Verney, V. Mem. ii, 361 (1647): Jones (1701) writes contages.

-ü. Marg. Paston often writes *su 'you' in unstressed positions—e.g. i. 67; otherwise generally *sow, *sow, &c. This may express the shortened form in a weak position.

M.E. ai, ei in Unstressed Syllables.

15th Century.

'æin, 'ain. *St. Editha. vyleny, 2. 384.
Shillingford (1447-50). certyn, 53.
Marg. Paston. meynten, ii. 83.

-ain' , 'ain'. Shillingford. synt Syvern, 9; sent Paull, 11.
Gregory's Chron. (1450). Syn Lénarde, 61; Syn Jóhn, 94; men-tayne, 86.

Cely Papers. bargen, 40.
Letters and Papers, ii. certen, 59; abstynence (?).

'ei. Shillingford. curtessy, 20.

'ail, 'eil. *St. Editha. counselle, 3; consyler, 725; bátelle, 35; vitel.
Shillingford. counselle, 18.
Sir J. Fortescue (1470). vèssells, 123, vitalles, 132 (also vèssailles, 123).

Capgrave's Chron. counselle, 171.

'oir. Gregory's Chron. devyr, 152.

'ai. Cely Papers. Thursda, 12.

-ail.

16th Century.

Lord Berners' Froissart. bâttel, I. 121, batelles, I. 19; counsell (N.). I. 34; vèssel, I. 36, râscalle, I. 50; trâvell, I. 222; trayvell (N.). I. 222, traveded (P.P.), I. 222; appârzed, I. 43 (also batâyle, I. 121); vitaylle, I. 33; aparailed, I. 30; counsaile (Vb. and N.). I. 28.

Ascham. bâttel, Tox. 76 (also bâttayle, Tox. 73).

Cavendish, L. of Wolsey. councel, 5; travelled 'worked', 57; travel (present-day sense), 62.

-ain', -eain. Lord Berners' Froissart. certenly, I. 194; capten, I. 255.
Roper's Life of Sir T. More (1566). certyne, vi. 35; Ann Bullen, xx. 7.

Ascham. mâynteners.


Capgrave's Chron. counsellens, 25; certyn, 90 (also chapeleyn, 4).


-ais, -eais. Lord Berners' Froissart. curtesy, I. 30; burgesses, I. 205, &c., &c.; unharrest, I. 46.


Cavendish, Life of Wolsey. palice, 77; Calice (Place N.), 67.
The diphthongs *ai* and *ei*, already in M.E. probably, levelled under *[æi]* or *[ei]* in stressed syllables, are simplified in unstressed syllables to a simple front vowel, probably *[i]*, written sometimes e, sometimes i, at least as early as the first half of the fifteenth century.

Before /l/ and /n/ th. spelling is also generally e or i, the latter becoming increasingly more frequent in course of time. Certain speakers seem to tend to *[a]* expressed by a, cf. vitalies (Sir J. Fortescue); rascal (Lord Berners); vilanous (Q. Elizabeth). Present-day usage leans, on the whole, to *[a]* or syllabic / in *[vitz, baetl]*, &c., but keeps *[i]* before n [vlin, kæptin], &c.

Finally, we find *a* = *[ə]* in Cely Papers—Thursda—but more frequently *[i]*, as at present—written y by Gabriel Harvey and the ladies of the Verney family.

In the unstressed prefix *saint* = *[sn]* or *[sən]* we get apparently the type corresponding to the Early Modern *an* in vilan-ous *[vilæn-əs]*, the old forms *syn* *[sin]*, &c., only surviving in St. John, St. Clair (or Sinclair), St. Leger as family names *[sindʒən]*, &c., where the stressing of the first syllable is clearly more recent than the unstressed forms in which *[sn]* arose.

Machin has *selenger*, and must have stressed the first syllable, since the intrusive -*n*- (cf. messenger, &c.) is only found in unstressed syllables.

See p. 329 for weak forms of old *they, them, their*.

**M.E. *oi* in Unstressed Syllables.**

15th Century.

- **ois.** Gregory's Chron. Camyse *Camoys*, 178; porpys *porpoise*, 141.
- **oir.** Bury Wills (1501). toorkes *turquoise*, 91.
- **oir.** Will of Lord Lovel (Oxf., 1455). manoirs, L. D. D. 74. 9; manourys, ibid. 73. 1.
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16th Century.

Euphues. tortyseye, 61.
-ois. Machyn's Diary. Gastyn, 292; Spenser, Glose to Shep. Cal., Nov., 'Mr. George Gaskin, a wittie gentleman, and the very chefe of our late rymers'.

17th Century.

Vol. iii. tortus shell, Mrs. Spencer, 50 (1652).
Vol. iv. Shammee Gloves, Sir R. V., 327 (1685); Mrs. Aphra Behn—Lucky Chance (1686), 2. 1, has shammy breeches.
Milton's Comus, Sabrina's Song. turkiš.
Marston's Eastward Ho. porpice.

Confusion of -eous, -ous; -iour, -our, &c.; -ier, -er.

Cely Papers. marvylyusly, 165.
Jul. Berners. laborous.
Sir T. Elyot. laborously, 2. 275.
Latimer's Sermon. righluous, 181.
Ascham. barbariousnes, Tox. 28.
Shakespeare, First Fol. 'reallious, Merry Wives, iv. 5.
Lady Hobart. serus 'serious'; Verney Mem. iv. 41 (1663); Sir R. L'Estrange, stupendious, Dissenters Sayings, pt. 2. 56 (1682).
Wentworth Pprs. covelious, 102, mischevyous, 174.
Reg. for Council of the Nth. mysbehaviors, Lttrs. and Pprs., i. 57 (1484).
Lord Berners' Froissart. behaviour, i. 69.
Sir T. Elyot. hauour 'good behaviour', 2. 409.
Q. Elizabeth. behavor, Lttrs. to J. VI, 28.

We may note that Lady Wentworth's mischevyous [mistʃiˈvəʊs] is now one of the worst possible vulgarisms, and covetious would run it pretty close.

Much has been written on the confusion of these suffixes, cf. Jespersen, Mod. Engl. Gr. 9. 82, &c., and Müller, Engl. Lautlehre nach James Elphinston, §§ 208–12.

Lord Berners' Froissart. fronters, i. 72, i. 125; barrers, i. 129; currers, i. 137.

Loss of Vowel.

Initial weak syllable.

St. Editha—scomfytyd, 67; Pecok—pistle; Cely Pprs.—pwoyment, 71; Lord Berners—payment, i. 215; a great rayne and a clyps, 1. 297; Latimer—policaries, 86, leauen 'eleven', 102; Ascham—spence 'expenditure'; Machyn—postyll 'apostle', salt 'assault', 282; Q. Elizabeth—scusis 'excuses'.

Lady Hobart. 'amel 'enamel', Verney Mem. iii. 25 (1650).
Peter Wentworth. Query 'equerry' (now generally [ekˈwɔrɪ]), Wentw. Pprs. 409, 433, 443 (twice).
Loss of -i before -sh, followed by suffix.
Bokenam—embelshyn ‘embellish’, Ann. 341; Capgrave’s Chron.—

Loss of vowel (-i-) in superl. suffix.
Siege of Rouen—ryalste ‘royalest’, 27; Lord Berners—the moost
  outragiouslpeople, i. 311; Q. Elizabeth—carefulst, Littrs. 48, thank-
  fulst, ibid. 66; Otway—ungratefullst, Friendship in Love.

Loss of vowel immediately after chief stress, before -n.
Cely Papers. reknyng, 145.

Loss of -e-, &c., before -r + vowel.
Marg. Paston—Margretys, i. 236; Elyot—robry, Gou. i. 273, ii. 86;
  Latimer—Deanry, 67; Lever’s Sermons—robry, 27, brybry, 34;
  Gabr. Harvey’s Lttrs.—trechrously, 73.

Loss of vowel (-i?) before -n.
Gabr. Harvey’s Lttrs.—reasnable, 13; Edw. Alleyn—parsnage,
  Alleyne Pprs., p. xiii (1610).

(a) Loss of vowel after and before another cons.; (b) also after -e and
  before a vowel, with shifting of stress.
(a) Bokenam—spyrlys ‘spirits’, Pr. Marg. 48; Capgrave—barnes
  ‘barons’, 171 (twice).
(b) Latimer—shriues ‘sheriffs’, 154.

Loss of vowel following first, stressed syllable, between consonants.
S. of Rouen—enmys, 24; singler, Cov. Leet 72 (1424); Marg.
  Paston—fantsy, ii. 83; Gregory, cytsyn ‘citizen’, 64; Doll Leake—
  bisis, Verney Mem. iv. 113 (1605); Wm. Baker, Rules for True
  Spelling (1724)—medson ‘medicine’, venzin ‘venison’.

Loss of vowel immediately after stressed syllable, before weak vowel or (h-).
  Gregory. unt hym (unto), 218.

Loss of -i- after front vowel.
Marg. Paston. payt ‘pay it’, i. 256.

Other losses after stressed syllable.
Marg. Pasion. yis ‘it is’, ii. 386.

Loss of syllable in the middle of words.

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CHAPTER VIII

CHANGES IN CONSONANTAL SOUNDS

The consonantal changes which we have now to consider are remarkable in that while the results were undoubtedly characteristic of English speech for several centuries, a very large number of those pronunciations, the existence of which can be proved by occasional spellings oft-times repeated, by rhymes and by the statements of the grammarians, have, during the last hundred years or so, been eliminated from polite speech, and survive only in Provincial or Vulgar forms of English. Such are the added -d in gound, or -t in sermont, &c. Others, again, survive in what is rapidly becoming archaic usage, although, like ‘the dropping of the g’ in shillin’, &c., they are still widespread among large classes of the best speakers, no less than among the worst. Yet other tendencies in the pronunciation of consonantal combinations are repudiated altogether by purists as slipshod, while many persons who slip into them quite naturally in rapid speech would disavow any such habits if questioned upon the subject. To this class belongs the dropping of / in mostly, roast beef, &c.

If we could recall speakers from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries it is probable that what would strike us most would be the pranks that even the most refined and well-bred persons would play with the consonants. From this point of view the English of these periods would appear to us with our modern standards as a mixture of rusticity, slipshodness, and vulgarity. It is, I think, impossible to doubt that speakers who, from their education or their social experience, or both, must have been among the most irreproachable of their time, who could and did mingle with the great world, really did speak in what we should now consider a most reprehensible manner. The testimony from all sources is too strong to be ignored. We might disbelieve, or hesitate as to the interpretation of any one authority, if unsupported by other evidence, but when all tell the same tale, when we find Pope rhyming neglects with sex, the Verney ladies and Lady Wentworth writing respeck, propeck, strick, and so on, and the writers on pronunciation before, after, and contemporary with these personages deliberately stating that final / is omitted in a long list of words which includes the above, then we must admit that if all this is not conclusive evidence on the point, it will be impossible ever to get any reliable information regarding the modes of speech of past ages.

But the case for taking these various indications seriously becomes stronger when we discover that the existence of many of these, to us, peculiar pronunciations is established by occasional spellings reaching
far back to the fifteenth century, and beyond that into the M.E. period itself.

In fact the more persistently the records of English speech are studied, the more it becomes apparent that the same general tendencies of change which are even to-day in force have been active for centuries. This is nowhere truer than of consonantal changes, but it holds good also of the treatment of vowels in unstressed positions, and, to some extent also, of the isolative changes in vowels in stressed syllables.

It has been pointed out earlier in this book that down to far on in the eighteenth century the natural tendencies were allowed more or less unrestricted play, and this among speakers of the Received Standard of the period no less than among the more uneducated. Purists, as we know, existed, who protested against this or that usage, but few listened to them. Standards of refinement were certainly recognized, there were fashionable tricks which had a vogue and died away, vulgarisms and rusticities were unquestionably clearly perceived, and laughed at by those who had the entrance to the *beau monde* and were conversant with its usages. But the standards of this class of speakers were not those of the self-constituted authorities on 'correctness' who abound from the seventeenth century onwards. Habits of speech which provoked the mirth of the former because they were not those of persons of quality and fashion, were not, in most cases, the kind of 'errors' which came under the lash of the purists. It is characteristic of those who set out to instruct the public at large how they ought to pronounce, that they almost invariably fix as subject for their censure, among other things it is true, upon those very features in the natural speech of their time which are most deeply rooted in traditional habit and destined to remain as bases for the language of the future. This is true of Gill in the first quarter of the seventeenth century, to some extent of Cooper in the last quarter of the same century, of Swift early in the following century, and of Elphinston towards the end of the eighteenth century. With all respect be it said, it is true of Mr. Bridges in his heroic if unavailing onslaughts upon the present treatment in ordinary English of the vowels of unstressed syllables, grounded as this is upon tendencies which have prevailed in our language from its earliest history.

Among all the writers on pronunciation during the eighteenth century, Jones, in the Expert Orthographer, 1701, appears to be one of the least censorious. He records unblushingly, and without hostile comment, omissions and additions of consonants which we know from other sources, indeed, were habitual, but which it must have made some of his colleagues in the art of English speech extremely angry to see set down in this cool matter-of-fact way. Jones's business is primarily to teach English spelling, but his method of introducing each rule with the words 'When is the sound of such and such a letter written in such and such a way?' enables him to shed an amount of light upon the genuine pronunciation of his time which greatly exceeds that thrown by most other books of the kind before and for a long time after him. Now nearly all Jones's statements are shown to be true to fact by the enlightening spellings of the Verney family and of Lady Wentworth, to say nothing of the rhymes of good poets, but they must have appeared very outrageous to those whose
main object was to get as far away as possible from realities, and to construct a fantastic form of English from the spelling.

But if the protests of the purists passed unheeded among the wits of either Charles's days and those of James II, Anne, and the first two Georges, it cannot be denied that the grammarians came to their own at last—up to a point. The process of 'improvement', so far as one can see, but it is absurd to attempt great preciseness in these matters, began roughly in the third quarter of the eighteenth century, and has gained in force and volume ever since.

But if the triumph of the pedagogue is thus unquestionable, the success, as has been suggested repeatedly in this book, must be set down rather to social causes than to a sudden capacity on the part of the Orthoepist to persuade those to whom he had so long preached in vain. It was assuredly not the Verneys and Wentworths, the Lady Hobarts, or 'my sister Carburer' who first adopted the new-fangled English. These and their like, and long may they flourish, have hardly done so completely at the present time. It was the new men and their families, who were winning a place in the great world and in public affairs, who would be attracted by the refinements offered by the new and 'correct' system of pronunciation which they learnt from their masters of rhetoric, or from their University tutors. That this new, wealthy, and often highly cultivated class should gradually have imposed upon society at large the gentilities of the academy of deportment, and have been able to insist with success upon gown instead of 'gound', strict instead of 'strick', vermin instead of 'varmint', richest instead of 'richis', and so on, would have seemed incredible to Lady Wentworth and her friends. But so it has come about. Possibly the relations of Dr. Johnson and Mrs. Piozzi are types of the process at its best, and one may suppose that the great man would not hesitate to correct what he took to be improprieties of speech in his circle, and that pronunciations which received his sanction would rapidly gain currency far and wide. In fact, it is not wholly fanciful to attribute in no small measure to the personal prestige of Johnson, a prestige of a very peculiar kind, more powerful perhaps than that possessed by any purely learned man before or since, the very marked reaction in favour of a certain type of 'correctness' in speech which set in about this time, and which has continued ever since to make fresh inroads upon established tradition. But even so mighty a force as Samuel Johnson required suitable social conditions in which to exert his influence.

The gradual penetration of those circles of society whose speech constitutes the Received Standard with something approaching the ideals of elegance and correctness maintained by the purists has been a slow process, and though each generation probably sees something of the old usage given up, there are many strongholds of ancient habits which still resist the encroachments of innovation. 'Ed'ord', 'husban', 'edikate', 'Injun', 'ooman', 'masty' (mastiff), 'pagin' (pageant), and the like, have gone, but [grindz, nridz, ofn, ltrajf, bousan], and many others, survive from the wreckage. These natural and historic forms are growing steadily less, and every 'advance' in education sweeps more of them away. It will be interesting to see what fresh pranks the rising genera-
tion will play, and with what new refinements they will adorn our language.

As regards the dialectal origin of the consonantal changes, it is difficult to assign any specific Regional starting-point to most of them. It seems probable that the loss or assimilation of consonants in groups, the dropping of final consonants, the development of parasitic consonants between certain combinations, and so on, belong to the universal tendencies of English speech. We find evidence of all these changes East, West, and Centre in the dialects of the South and Midlands, in the fifteenth century. An examination of the early forms of Place Names would certainly reveal earlier examples of these and other processes than any given below, and might also enable us to say in which areas they were most prevalent. Other changes, such as the loss of initial *w-* before rounded vowels, the development of *w-* before certain other rounded vowels, the development of initial *y-* [j] before certain front vowels, might be localized with more precision were our knowledge of the distribution of Regional dialect features during the Late M.E. and Early Modern periods more complete than it is at present.

Whatever be the area whence these various consonant changes started, nearly all of them are found fairly early in the London dialect, and later in Received Standard.

For the sake of clearness it has seemed best to deal with the various phenomena in groups, according to the general nature of the process involved, rather than by taking every consonant separately and discussing everything that may happen to it.

The following general classification of consonant changes includes under its several heads most of the chief points that demand attention.

A. **Isolative Changes without either Loss or Addition.**

1. *-h* becomes *-f-*; (a) final, (b) in combination, *-ht*.
2. *-ng* becomes *-n*, i.e. [ŋ] becomes [n].
3. *th* [p] becomes *f*, and *[zı]* becomes *v*, initially, medially, or finally.
4. *-r-* becomes *-sh*, i.e. [s] becomes [ʃ], medially and finally.
5. Interchange of *w-* and *v-* and of *v-* and *w-*.

B. **Combinative Changes involving neither Loss nor Addition.**

1. *ty*, i.e. [tʃ] becomes [tʃ] initially and medially.
2. *[ʃʃ]* becomes *[ʃ]* initially and medially.
3. *[dʃ]* becomes *[dʒ]* initially and medially.
4. *[zʃ]* becomes *[z]* medially.
5. Assimilation of *-nf-* to *-mf-*.

C. **Loss of Consonants.**

1. Loss of initial *h-*: (a) stressed, (b) in unstressed syllables.
2. Loss of *w-*: (a) in stressed, (b) in unstressed syllables.
3. Loss of *-l* before certain consonants, immediately following.
4. Loss of *r*: (a) medially before a following consonant, (b) finally.
5. Loss of consonants, especially of *d, t*, when final, immediately preceded by another consonant.
(6) Loss of consonants between vowels, or after a consonant before a following vowel.

(7) Loss of back or front-open-voiceless consonant, written \( h \) or \( gh \)
(a) finally, (b) in combination with \(-t\) (written \(-ght\)).

(8) Loss of final \(-f\).

(9) Loss of \( n \) before other consonants, in unstressed syllables.

D. Addition of Consonants.

(1) Of \( w- \) before rounded vowels.

(2) Of \( y- \) [j] before front vowels.

(3) Of \[j\] after \( k-\), \( g- \) before front or originally front vowels.

(4) Of \( d\), medially in combination \(-nl-\); of \( b \) in combination \(-ml-\).

(5) Of \(-d-\) or \(-l-\) finally after \(-r, -n, -l, -s, -f\).

(6) Of \( h- \) initially before vowels.

E. Voicing of Voiceless Consonants.

(1) Of initial \( wh- = [w] \).

(2) Of other consonants: (a) initially, (b) medially; (c) between vowels, (d) after a voiced consonant before a vowel.

F. Unvoicing of Voiced Consonants.

It will be observed that the terminology employed in the above system of classification is not in all cases strictly accurate from the phonetic point of view. Thus \( h- \) the aspirate is not a consonant, but a 'rough breathing', or stressed-breath-on-glide. Again, when \( gown \) is pronounced \( ground \) there is in reality no 'addition' of a consonant at the end; all that happens is that denasalization takes place before the tongue-position of \(-n-\) is dissolved. The effect to the ear is that a new and different consonant is added to the \(-n-\); but from the phonetic point of view there is a diminution, not a renewal of activity. Similarly, we talk popularly of 'dropping' a final consonant when \( husban' \) instead of \( husband \) is pronounced. As a matter of fact, all that happens in the former case is that nasalization continues to the end of the articulation. With this warning there can, I think, be no danger in adopting for the sake of convenience a popular terminology which regards the acoustic effect upon the listener, rather than the actual activities of the speaker.

A. Isolative Changes without either Loss or Addition.

M.E. -(g)\( h \) becomes \(-f\).

M.E. \( h, gh \) (back-open-voiceless cons.), at the end of a syllable, or before \(-t\), either disappears altogether in the South or becomes \(-f\). For the disappearance see p. 305.

The change to \( f \) is the result of a strong lip-modifying ('labializing') tendency, which at last was so pronounced that the back consonant which it accompanied was gradually weakened and finally lost altogether,
leaving presumably a lip-open consonant, which generally tends to become the lip-teeth /f/. In some dialects the latter sound was probably developed in M.E. It cannot have been fully formed in London English much before the fifteenth century or it would have been perpetuated in the spelling of some words at least. The following examples in some cases show -f in some forms which in present-day Received Standard have lost the consonant completely. Some of the examples are from documents which may show Regional usage differing from that of the London Standard of the period. The spelling Edyngburth 'Edinburgh', in Berners' Froissart i. 85, shows that the old sound still preserved in the North was unfamiliar to him.

Spellings with -f are:—thorf 'through', M. Paston ii. 197, 1465; troff 'trough', 1553. R. Bradley's Will (Leics.), Linc. Dioc. Docs. 164. 14; to laffe, Letter of Barnabe Googe, Arber, p. 12, 1563; laffe rhymes distaffe, Gabr. Harvey's Letter Bk. 117, 1573-80; troffe rhymes skoffe, ibid.; 'hold their hips and loffe, Shakesp., First Fol., 1621, Midsummer N. D. i. i; 'and coffing drowns the parson's saw', L. L. Lost (Song at end of Play); also chuffes, First Pt., Hen. IV, Act ii, Sc. ii; Butler, 1634, 'laugh, cough, tough, enough commonly sound like laf, cof, tuf, enuf'; 'I laft at him', Mall V., Verney Mem. ii. 379, 1647; Cooper, 1685, notes -f in rough, trough, and that enough as a 'numeral' is 'pronounced, and better written enow'.

It seems clear from the above that -f was pronounced, from early in the sixteenth century, in those words of this class in which we now use the sound. (For the vowel sound and the spelling of laugh cf. p. 205.) No doubt other words were included by some speakers. It is probable that thof for though, which Fielding puts into the mouth of Mrs. Honour, Sophia Western's waiting-woman in Tom Jones (1748), was at that time provincial or vulgar.

-ft- becomes ft.

The curious spelling unsoffet 'unsought', Gregory's Chron. 192, 1450-70, is undoubtedly put for 'unsoft'. The rhyme manslaughter—daughter in Roister Doister, 1553, is ambiguous.

Marston rhymes after—daughter, Eastward Hoe, v. i, 1604; the Verney Papers have dafter(e), 1629, Mrs. Wiseman, p. 143; Butler, 1634, 'daughter commonly sounded dafter'; Verney Mem.—dafter, ii. 203, Mrs. Isham, 1645, do. iii. 315 (three times), 1657, and again, iii. 232, 1655; Jones, 1701—'some sound daughter, bought, naught, taught, nought, &c., as with an f, saying daufter, bost', &c., pp. 54 and 55. It is hard to say how far Jones is to be trusted not to include provincialisms or vulgarisms among his pronunciations. Mrs. Honour, the waiting-woman in Tom Jones, writes soft 'sought' in a letter. Probably by Fielding's time, at any rate, many of the -ft pronunciations given by Jones were becoming antiquated among the best speakers. To judge from the statements of the grammarian and the evidence of the occasional spellings, it certainly looks as though throughout the seventeenth century the usage was not definitely fixed as regards the distribution of the various types, so that dater, daughter, dafter [dætər, dər, dæftər, slætər, slər, slæftər, bɔft, bɔt], &c., were all in use.
'DROPPING THE g' IN FINAL -ing

There is no assignable reason beyond the fortunes of apparently arbitrary selection from among the various types why we should say [slı:tə] on the one hand, and [li:tə] on the other.

Substitution of -th [p] for -gh = [x] or [j].

We sometimes get a substitution of [p] for the old voiceless back or front open consonants, where these still survive among an older generation, or occur in words introduced from another dialect. I take the spelling Edynghurth 'Edinburgh', Berners' Froissart i. 85, and Machyn's Luthborow 'Loughborough', 309, to be examples of such a substitution, and likewise Peter Wentworth's Usquebaighth 'Usquebaugh', W. Pprs. 196, 1711; Jones's sith for sigh must also be a survival of such an imitative pronunciation. The same is true of the modern pronunciation [kɪkjɔ] for Keighly, Yorks., the younger generation of the district no longer using the old sound, and finding it more convenient to adopt one which can be mastered by speakers from farther south.

Substitution of [-n] for [ŋ], popularly known as 'dropping the g' in the Suffix -ing.

Such pronunciations as huntin', shillin', &c., which for some reason are considered as a subject of jest in certain circles, while in others they are censured, are of considerable antiquity, as the examples which follow will show. The substitution of 'n' for 'ng' [ŋ] in Present Participles and Verbal Nouns was at one time apparently almost universal in every type of English speech. At the present time this habit obtains in practically all Regional dialects of the South and South Midlands, and among large sections of speakers of Received Standard English. Apparently in the twenties of the last century a strong reaction set in in favour of the more 'correct' pronunciation, as it was considered, and what was in reality an innovation, based upon the spelling, was so far successful that the [ŋ] pronunciation ('with -ng') has now a vogue among the educated at least as wide as the more conservative one with -n.

It is probable that a special search would reveal far more numerous and earlier forms of the -n spellings than those I have noted.

Norf. Guilds (1389), holdyn, 63, drynkyn, 59, 66, 1389; Marg. Paston, wrylyn (N.), i. 49, 1443, gidyn (N.), ii. 74, dyysen (N.), ii. 92, hangyn (Part.), ii. 124; Agn. Paston, walkyn, Past. Ltrs. i. 114, 1450; Gregory, 1450-70, blasyn sterre 'comet', 80, hayryn 'herring', 169; Guild of Tailors, Exeter, hyndryn, 317, 1466; Sir Richard Gresham, 1520, hanggyns, Ellis iii. 1. 234, 235; Machyn, 1550—, sylyyn, 33, rydyyn, 183, standyn, 191, syngyne, 281; Q. Elizabeth, besichen, Letter to James VI, 60.

The following are taken from Verney Memoirs:—seein, missin, ii. 63, 'en, 70, comin, 71, plondarin, 71, all written by Cary Verney, 1642; I may go a beggin, a beggen, Mrs. Isham, ii. 207, 220, 1645; shillins, Doll Smith, iii. 409, 1657; disobedgin. Lady Hobart, iv. 55, 1664; lodgens, Lady Elmes, iv. 121, 1665, lodgins, Lady Hobart, iv. 126, 1665.
Cooper, 1685, includes among words having the same sound though differently spelt, *coming—cummin, coughing—coffin, jerkin—jerking*; Lord Rochester, 1647–80, rhymes *farthing—bear-garden*.[8] In 'Against Disturbers of the Pit'.

Lady Wentworth has *takin, dynin-room*, 47, *lodgins*, 45, *levin 'living'*· 54, Fieldin, 58, *approachin*, 66, *buildin*, 84, Hayshins, 56, *devertin tricks*, 57, *prancin along*, 57, *ingagin*, 60, *digin 'digging*', 61, *fardin*, 99, want of *dungin 'dunging*', 111, *mornin, 113, stockins*, 126, *writins*, 275, the Anthem for the *Thanksgivin*, 321. Swift in the Introd. to *Polite Conversations* puts *learnen* among the words 'as pronounced by the chief patterns of politeness at Court, at Levees', &c., to which he objects. Pope, 1713, rhymes *gardens—farthings*, Epigr. to Lord Radnor, where the latter word is doubtless pronounced as by Lord Rochester and Lady Wentworth. Walker, Rhet. Gr., 3rd ed., 1801, hedges a good deal. He says that he can assert that the best speakers do not invariably pronounce *-ing* to rhyme with *king*, but rather as in. He recommends *-in* in the Present Participles of words like *sing, flin, ring*, but prefers *-ing* in others. 'Our best speakers universally pronounce *singin, bringin, flingin*.' After saying 'What a trifling omission is *g* after *n*', he goes on: 'Trifling as it is, it savours too much of vulgarity to omit *-g* in any words except the *-ing*-type. Writing, reading, speaking are certainly preferable to *writin, readin, speakin*, wherever the language has the least degree of solemnity.' Walker is here trying to run with the hare and hunt with the hounds.

**-ng written for -n.**

The pronunciation implied by this spelling may be heard occasionally at the present time, sometimes from those speakers who 'leave out the *g* in the ending *-ing*. A few scattered spellings of this kind, one from the fifteenth and others from the sixteenth century onwards, may be recorded.


It is difficult to say how far some of these are not inverted spellings implying that *-ng* has for the writer the same value as *-n*, and how far, on the other hand, they represent genuine pronunciations with [ŋ]. Such pronunciations undoubtedly do exist.

**-nk = [-ŋk-] for -ng- [ŋ(ŋ)].**

Among very vulgar speakers—not in London alone—we sometimes hear *‘nothink’ for nothing* at the present time. Cavendish, L. of Wolsey, 1557,
writes *hankyng*, p. 97, and Q. Elizabeth, in 1548, *‘brinkinge of me up’*, and *‘our brinkers up’*, Ellis ii. 2. 154.

This pronunciation is referred to by Elphinston, 1787, who remarks *‘a common Londoner talks of *anny* think else, or *anny* thing kelse’,* and again, *‘English vulgarity will utter *anny* think (dhat iz, thing’)*.

Assimilation of [ŋ] to [n] before point-consonants—d, t, th.

Shillingford has *leynth* *length*, 85; Elyot’s Gouernour has *streithe*, 237; Milton in his autograph MS writes *streith*, Com. 416, and again Com. 418, but he has written *g* above the line in the latter. *Streith* occurs also in Verney Mem. ii. 106. Lady Sussex (1641), and *kaindom* ib. ii. 90. Elphinston regards *lenth*, *streith* as *‘the Scottish shiboleth’*, and Walker as *‘the sure mark of provincial pronunciation’*.

Change of th [p] to f; [ð] to v.

The results of these changes are heard sporadically at the present time. It is doubtful whether such pronunciations as [tif, fir], &c., for *teeth, three*, &c., are characteristic of any Regional dialect as a whole. They appear to belong rather to individuals here and there, and they seem to occur more frequently in the speech of the lower strata of London speakers than elsewhere, though they may survive as uncorrected faults of childhood among individuals in all classes and belonging to any region. I have not found any very early examples, but the following are of some interest.

Finally, Bk. of Quint, *erf* = *‘earth’*, 18, 1460–70; Gregory has *Lambeffe* for *Lambeth*, 229; initially, Machyn has *frust* for *thrust*, 21, and *Frogmortone* for *Throgmorton*; medially, Q. Elizabeth, *bequived* *‘bequeathed’*, Transl. 149; and finally, John Alleyne, Alloyne Papers, *helfe*, 15 and 16 (159–?), and Middleton, Chaste Maid in Cheapside, has *‘neither kiff nor kin’*, Act iv, Sc. i (1630); Mrs. Isham has *lofte* for *loathe*, Verney Mem. ii. 220, 1645. In the last instance the *-f* is a typical addition, cf. p. 309, and does not concern us for the moment.

Elphinston, in 1787, refers to *‘the tendency of the low English to Redriph and loph instead of Rotherhithhe and loath’*, cf. Müller, § 252. Readers of Cowper’s correspondence are familiar with his pet name *‘Mrs. Frog’* for Mrs. Throgmorton, which shows that a pronunciation of the name similar to that used by Machyn still existed.

Lady Wentworth writes *threvoles* for *frivolous*, 127, which rather suggests that she pronounced *‘th’* as *‘f’*.

Final and medial s becomes *‘sh’ = [ʃ]*.

This isolative change does not appear to be widespread, but I include it because I find that I have a few early examples noted among my collections, and it is referred to as a vulgarism by Elphinston in the eighteenth century. This fact makes it probable that the early forms mean something, and are not mere scribal vagaries.

The following are the examples I have noted:—R. of Brunne, Handlyng Sinne, 1302, *reioshe* *‘rejoice’, 2032, vasshelage, 4610*; Bokenam, 1443, *vertush, Ann. 248, mossi* *‘moss’, Ann. 360, reioysshyng* *‘rejoicing’, Agn. 401, dysshese* *‘disease’, Agn. 614*; Engl. Register of Oseney, 1460, *blesshyng*, p. 13; M. Paston, a powter *vesshell*, ii. 75, 1461; Caxton, *kysshed* *‘kissed’, Jason 85. 35*; Machyn has *the prynche of Spaine*, 51, 52,
CHANGES IN CONSONANTAL SOUNDS

2) Changes in consonantal sounds

Henslow’s Diary (1598), Henslow, 213; Sir J. Leake, Verney Mem., burgishes ‘burgesses’, ii. 218, 1645; Lady Lambton, husband, Basire Corresp. 79 (1649); Mrs. Basire, parshalles, 111 (1653); ‘touch’d a gall’d beast till he winch’d’, Congreave’s Old Batchelor, Act v, Sc. xiii (1693).

Elphinston notes the vulgar cutlash, nonplusch, frontishpiece, Porchmouth. In the last word the change is probably combative; an earlier example of this ‘vulgarism’ is Porchmouth, Sir T. Seymour, St. Pprs. Hen. VIII, i. pp. 775, 776 (twice), 1544; the same spelling is used by C. Verney, V. Mem. iv. 136, 1665; J. Verney, 244, 1679; A. Nicholas, p. 265, and N. N. 266, 1680.

Those who are familiar with Martin Chuzzlewit will remember Mrs. Gamp’s vagaries in respect of substituting ‘sh’ for ‘s’.

Interchange of v- and w-; v- for w-, and w- for v-.

This was formerly a London vulgarism, but is now apparently extinct in the Cockney dialect. Personally, I never actually heard these pronunciations, so well known to the readers of Dickens, Thackeray, and of the earlier numbers of Punch. My time for observing such points begins in the late seventies or early eighties of the last century, and I never remember noticing this particular feature in actual genuine speech, though I remember quite well, as a boy, hearing middle-aged people say weal for veal and vich for which, jocularly, as though in imitation of some actual type of speech with which they were familiar. I used to wonder why these people introduced this peculiarity in jest, and whose pronunciation it was supposed to imitate. I have since come to the conclusion that my boyhood’s friends must have heard these pronunciations in their youth—say from twenty to thirty years before my time, which would bring us back to the forties and fifties of last century. Another possibility is that the generation to whom I am referring did not as a matter of actual personal experience hear this interchange of v- and w-, but that they took them over from Dickens.

The forms which I have noted are the following, though I have come across many others from the fifteenth century onwards:—Palladius, 1420, vyves ‘wives’, 25. 669; Bokenam, 1441, valkyngse, Ann. 540, veye, Ann. 565; awayte ‘await’, Marg. Paston, ii. 249. 1465; Lord Lovel’s Will, vyne ‘wine’, L. D. D. 17. 12, Oxf., 1455; Prynce of Valys, Gregory, 1450–70, 192; Reception of Cath. of Ar., 1501, vele ‘weal’, 415; Machyn, the Cockney Diarist, has women, 56, 59, &c., Volsake ‘Woolsack’, 91, veyver ‘weaver’, 83, Vestmynster, 86, Vetyngton ‘Whittington’, 96, woman, 98, Vosseter ‘Worcester’, 102, Voderoffe, otherwise Woodroffe, 303.

Elphinston notes the habit of confusing v and w among Londoners, but, while disapproving, does not assert that it is confined to vulgar speakers only; Walker regards the practice as ‘a blemish of the first magnitude’, but says that it occurs among the inhabitants of London, ‘not those always of the low order’.

I have noted the following early examples of w- for original v-:—St. Editha, vex ‘vex’, 47; awoowe ‘avow’, 864; Bokenam, wenger ‘avenger’, Ann. 476, wyce ‘vice’, Fth. 42; Marg. Paston, wechsaf, i. 49, 354; Gregory, very ‘very’, 192; Cely Papers, were ‘very’, 50.
ANTIQUITY OF 'sh-' SOUND FOR -ti-, -si-, ETC. 293

whalew 'value', 73, Wyllars 'Villiers', 76; Machyn, veloc 'velvet', 6, 11, 12, 19, &c., walance 'vallance', woyce 'voice', 58, wetelle 'victuals', wacabondes, 69, wergers, 141, waluw, 186, wue 'view', 293.

B. Combinative Changes without Loss or Addition.

-si-, -ti-, that is [-si-, -sj-], also su = [sjū], become 'sh' [ʃ].

The examples date from the middle of the fifteenth century. Marg. Paston—sesschyonys 'sessions', i. 178, 1450, conschens 'conscience', ii. 364, 366, 1469; Cely Papers—prosesschchon, 113, perlyshon 'partition', 57, partyshon, 133, fessychens, 23, restytuschon, 152, oblygaschons, 114, commygaschon, 5, dereeschons, 137; Letters and Papers i—huisshers 'ushers', 136, 1501; Admiral Sir Thos. Seymour—instroshens, St. Fprs., Hen. VIII, i. 779, 1544; Thos. Pery to Mr. R. Vane—commyshin, Ellis ii. 2. 140, 1539; Gabr. Harvey's Letters—ishu 'issue', 13, 1573–80; Q. Elizabeth, Letters to James VI (1582–1602)—alteracon, 2, expectacon, 3, execucon, 3; Marston, What you Will, 1607—caprichious, Act v, Sc. i. The following are all from the Verney Memoirs:—indisreshons, disposishons, Mall V., ii. 380, 1547; suspishiously, Lady V., ii. 245, 1646; condishume 'condition', Mrs. Isham ii. 206; menishone, M. Faulkiner, ii. 56; fondashon, Lady Sydenham, ii. 101; mentshoned 'mentioned', Lady Sydenham, ii. 162; hobbegashons, ibid. ii. 125, 'obligations'; adishon, Mary V., iii. 28, 1650; condishon, Mall V. (Sir Ralph's sister), iii. 213, 1655; possession, Cary Stewkley (Verney), iii. 434, 1656; pashens, Lady Hobart iv. 56, 1664. Cooper, 1685, notes that ci, ce, ti have the sound of sh in amient, artificial, conscience, magician, ocean, Egyptian, essential, patience, &c. Jones, 1701, says that ocean is pronounced oshan, and sh also in issue. Lady Wentworth writes:—Queen of Prushee, 63, exprestions, 50, pation 'passion', 49, fation 'fashion', 169, Prutia, 118, Prution (Lady Strafford), 243. Baker, in True Spelling, says that dictionary is pronounced dixnery. This last form indicates a pronunciation now extinct so far as I know. The above examples are quite sufficient to establish the early development of the present-day pronunciation.

Initial su- = [sjū] becomes 'shu-' = [ʃu].

1 The earliest examples of sh- spellings, initially, which I can record, date only from the late sixteenth and middle seventeenth centuries. The first is found in the Alleyne Papers—sheute 'suit', J. Alleyne, 159—, p. 16; the next are from the Verney Memoirs:—shur 'sure', Cary V., ii. 71, 1642; shuer, Lady Sydenham, ii. 101; shute (of clothes), Luce Sheppard, iii. 1653; shuer, Mrs. Sherard, iii. 324, 1657; shewid 'suited', ibid. iii. 325, 1657. Mrs. Basire writes ashoure, 112 (1653), shut 'suit', 132 (1654). Cooper mentions the pronunciations shure, shugar, 'facilitatis causa'. Jones says that sh- is pronounced in assume, assure, censure, consume, ensue, insure, sue, suet, sugar.

The careful pronunciation according to the spelling has been restored now in some of the above, such as suit, suet, consume, &c.

1 Note now, however, persheue 'pursue', Warden Rawlins of Merton Bp. Fox's Letters, p. 81 (1515 or -16).
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-di- [dj] becomes [dz].

Present-day usage varies considerably as to the pronunciation of this combination in different words. Thus, while soldier, grandeur are pretty generally pronounced [souldʒə, grændʒə] we do not, for the most part, say [rɪmdʒɨt, ɪndʒən, ɪdʒət, ɒudʒəs] for immediate, Indian, idiot, odious.

The ‘careful’ artificial pronunciation of these and other words which is now generally affected is, however, quite recent.

I am only able to offer comparatively few spellings, and only one of these earlier than the seventeenth century—Machyn’s sawgears ‘soldiers’, 302—to prove the [dz] pronunciation. The Verney Memoir furnish the following:—tedes ‘tedious’, Mall V., ii. 381. 1647; sogers ‘soldiers’, Lady Sussex, ii. 105, 153. 1642.

Jones, 1701, says that contagious, soldier, Indian, are pronounced contages, soger, Injan. Lady Wentworth writes sogar ‘soldier’, 113, emedgely ‘immediately’. Bertram, 1753, transliterates (for Danes) soldier, Indian, could you, had you, as soldsjer, indsjan, kudsju, hædsju. The last two examples are interesting as showing the same colloquial pronunciation of final -d, followed by y [j] in the next word of a sentence, as we now employ—[kudʒə, hædʒu].

Walker, Rhet. Gr., 3rd ed., 1801, says that polite speakers always pronounce edjucate, verchew, verdjure, and that they ought also to say ojeous, insidjeous, Injean. John Kemble, according to Leigh Hunt, Autobiogr. i. 180, said ‘ojus’, ‘hijjus’, ‘perfijjus’.

[ŋj] becomes [z].

This occurs chiefly in such words as pleasure, measure, where, originally, u was pronounced [jʊ], and in hosier, brasier, &c., though in the latter group probably [houzɪə, breziə], &c., are more common. Cary Verney, Mem. ii. 62. 1642, writes pleshar, plesshur, and Jones says that ‘sh’—here, clearly [ʃ]—is pronounced in measure, leisure, brasier, glasier, hosier.

-mf- becomes -mf-, -kn- becomes -tn-.

The assimilation of the point -n- to m before a following lip-consonant is a natural one, and may be heard even at the present time from persons who are not careful speakers, in rapid utterance. Thus, one may occasionally hear ‘all on board’, ‘he’s in bed’, &c.

The following examples are worth noting as showing the tendency at work in the middle of words:—imphants ‘infants’, Wilson, A. of Rhet. 52.; Lady Wentworth writes comfution ‘confusion’, W. Pprs. 113. 1710; Twittenham ‘Twickenham’ is found in Verney Mem. iv. 417. 1687; Lady Wentworth writes Twitnam, W. Pprs. 49. 1705, and this form is common in the eighteenth century, and often found in Pope’s poems and letters; Lady W. writes Lord Bartly for Berkley, 174. 1711.

C. Loss of Consonants.

Loss of the Initial Aspirate.

In discussing this question we must distinguish between h- in stressed syllables and in unstressed, and further between words of pure English
origin and those from French or Norman French. It is doubtful whether the latter were pronounced with an initial aspirate originally. As regards words of English origin, it is only in respect of stressed syllables that the question of ‘dropping the *h*’ arises. In unstressed syllables, e.g. the second element of compounds, and words such as Pronouns and Auxiliaries, which more often occur in unstressed positions in the sentence, the loss of *h* is very early, and at least as early as the thirteenth century is frequently shown by the spelling to have taken place in Pronouns (madim for *made him*) in the second elements of compounds (-ham and -um, &c., often confused in early forms of Pl. N.s). The question, then, is when did the tendency arise to pronounce ‘ill for hill, or ‘ome for home, &c., when these and other words occur as independent words in the sentence? Norman scribes are very erratic in their use of *h* in copying English manuscripts, and we therefore cannot attach much importance to thirteenth- or even to early fourteenth-century omissions of the letter which occur here and there. The forms in Norf. G.’s (1389), alf a pound, 80, and alpeny, 98, seem genuine. I have found comparatively few examples in the fifteenth century of spellings without *h*; even the Celys, although they write *h* where it is not wanted, do not omit it so far as I have noted. An unmistakable ‘dropping’ seems to be ousole ‘household’, in the Will of Sir T. Cumberworth, Linc. Dioc. Docs. 1451; Margaret Paston has astely, ii. 143. 1463. She also writes ereflyr ‘hereafter’, i. 530. 1460, but as she does not write ere for *here*, the loss of *h* in the former word is probably to be set down to lack of stress. The form ereflor also occurs in a letter of Q. Mary of Scotland (daughter of Hen. VII), in 1503, Ellis i. i. 42, and the same letter contains the spelling oude for hold, a genuine instance of ‘dropping the *h*’. Fifty years later, the Cockney Machyn has a fine crop of *h*-less forms:—ede ‘head’, 29, alff ‘half’, 13, 19, ard, 107, yt ‘hit’, 139, alpeny, 7, Amton courte, 9, elmet ‘helmet’, Allalows ‘All Hallows’, 61.

Cooper does not include the loss of initial *h* among his traits of ‘barbarous dialect’.

I have not noted any examples in the Verney Mem. except ombel ‘humble’, Cary V., ii. 63, and yumer ‘humour’, where the absence of the *h* in pronunciation was normal; Lady Wentworth also writes Umble, W. Prors. 47, for Humble, a family name, doubtless on the analogy of the Adjective, and youmore, 320, youmored, 105, 320. The restoration of an aspirate in the last word is a trick of yesterday, and I never observed it until a few years ago, and then only among speakers who thought of every word before they uttered it. Note Ospittals, eighteenth century V. Letters i, 105 (1700).

Mrs. Honour, in Tom Jones, writes:—‘mite not *ave* ever happened’; ‘that as always *ad*’, the last word being the only one stressed, except at *ome.* This phrase is still pronounced [atoum] by excellent speakers, and atbm is found as early as Layamon, c. 1200.

In the letter written by Mr. Jackson’s fiancée in Roderick Random, chap. xvi, there is not a single *h* left out, although several are wrongly introduced, neither is there any in the letter written by Mr. Jonathan Wild to Letitia in Fielding’s Life of that gentleman.

Later in the century Elphinston, 1787, notes that ‘many Ladies, Gentlemen and others have totally discarded’ initial *h* in places where
it ought to be used; Walker, 1801, also draws attention to the habit, which he attributes chiefly to Londoners, and Batchelor does the same.

The above evidence is too slight to found much upon, but so far as it goes, and its negative character is of some value, it would appear that the present-day vulgarism was not widespread much before the end of the eighteenth century. The gap in the evidence between Machyn and two hundred years later is remarkable. The practice, which apparently did exist in Machyn's day in London, must have been confined to a limited class. The evidence, from the spelling, for the wrongful addition of h-is, as we shall see, far more copious.

It may be remarked that the habit of omitting initial h-is common to all Regional dialects except those of the North. In Modified Standard also, this was very widespread when I was a boy, even people, below a certain rank in society, who were fairly well 'educated' being very shaky in this respect. This state of things has been very noticeably altered in the last few decades, presumably by the efforts of the schools.

**Loss of w.**

*Initially before rounded vowels.*

Alice Crane (cousin of the Pastons) signs herself to Marg. Paston, 'Youre pore bede oman and cosyn', Past. Ltrs. i. 343 (1455).

Machyn writes Odam for Woodham, 8o.

Jones, 1701, says 'the sound of o- written wo- when it may be sounded wo-' in wolf, Wolverhampton, worry, womb, woman, wonder, work, word, worse, worthy, woven, would, wound. Woad, he says, is pronounced ode. Mrs. Honour, Sophia Western's waiting-woman, writes uman 'woman' in a letter.

Tuckwell, Reminiscences of Oxford, records that Dr. Pusey's mother, Lady Lucy Pusey, who died well over 90 in 1859, always said 'ooman' for woman.

w- lost after a consonant before rounded vowels.

Agnes Paston—sor 'swore', Past. Ltrs. i. 219 (1451); John Alleyne, Alleyne Pprs. 15, has sord 'sword' (1559-7?); sowlen 'swollen', Thos. Watson, Teares of Fancie, Sonnet 35. 1593; Daines, 1640, says w is scarcely pronounced at all in swound 'swoon', and but moderately in sword, swore, 51; Sir R. Verney writes sورد 'sword', V. Mem. ii. 32, 84 (twice), 164 (twice), 1641; Cary Stewkley, V. Mem. iv. 341. 1685, writes sورد; Cooper, 1685, says 'w quiescit' in sword, sworn; Vanbrugh writes gud soon= God's wounds, Journey to London, 1726; Baker, 1724, gives the pronunciation of swoon as sound; Cooper, 1685, says that quote is pronounced like coat; Jones gives sord, solen, sorn, &c., as the normal pronunciations.

Qu- = [kw] becomes k:-' coting of ye scriptures', Euph. 320; Jones says k-for gu in banquet, conquer, liquid, quote, quoth.

**Loss of -w- before an unstressed vowel.**

This must be very old, cp. uppard, Trinity Homilies, p. 111 (c. 1200). Hammard 'homeward' occurs several times in S. Editha.

Except in Pl. N.s Harwich, Greenwich, &c., -w- has usually been 'restored', from the spelling, in this position—e. g. Edward, forward.

1 Retention of h- in Northern dialects. Mr. Harold Orton informs me that the statement requires qualification; h-is lost in the speech of Lorton (Cumb.) and Hackness (Yorks.). In Penrith and Byers Green (Durh.) forms with and without h- occur.
Mrs. Basire writes forard, Corresp. 137 (1654); Mrs. Alphra Behn writes aukard, Sir Patient Fancy, Act ii, Sc. 1; awkard is also found in Mountfort's Greenwich Park, Act 5, Sc. 2, 1691; Lady Lucy Pusey, according to Tuckwell, still called her famous son Ed'ard.

Loss of -l- before Consonants.

At the present time -l- is no longer pronounced in normal speech before lip-consonants, as in calf, half, balm, calm, &c., nor before back-consonants, as in walk, stalk, folk, &c. Before other consonants it is, on the whole, retained, e.g. mall, salt, &c.

The evidence for the loss of this consonant, so far as my experience at present goes, begins in the fifteenth century.1 The loss of the sound itself is doubtless older than the earliest spellings which omit the letter.

Bp. Bekinton, 1442, has behaf 'behalf', p. 86; Short Engl. Chron., 1465, Fakonbrige, p. 70; Gregory, 1450-70, sepukyr, 233; Cely Papers, 1475, &c.:—fawkyner, 81, Tawbot 'Talbot', 46, Pamar, 15, soudears, soudeyars 'soldiers', 146; fawkener, Jul. Berners, 1496; Ascham, mounta 'moulted', Tox. 26; Gabr. Harvey, Letters, Mamsyte, 144; Mulcaster, Elementarie, p. 128, enumerates as examples the following words in which l is not pronounced:—calm, balm, talk, walk, chalk, calf, calues, salues, as though caum, bawm', &c. Q. Elizabeth, Transl. 20, 1593, writes stauke (N.); Machyn writes hopene 'halfpenny', swoone 'swollen', 226, Northfoke, 149 (three times), sawgears 'soldiers', 302; Surrey, 1547, rhymes bemoan—swolne, Tottel's Misc. 28, thus justifying Machyn's spelling.

From Verney Memoirs come:—sogers, Lady Sussex, ii. 105,153, Sentarbornes 'St. Albans', Lady Sussex, ii. 104, my lorde fakeland, Lady Sussex, ii. 104, hop 'holp', Pret., W. Roades (Steward), iii. 274,1656, Norfuck, Edm. Verney, iii. 282, 1656, Mamsbury, Lady Bridgeman, iii, 1660. Cooper, 1685, notes that there is no l in Holborn; Jones, 1701, says that l is lost in Bristol (Bristow being the old type, and showing really no loss of l), folk, Cholmondeley, Holborn, Holms, holp, holpen (= 'hope, hopen'), Leopold, Lincoln, Norfolk, Suffolk, soldier, yolk. Lady Wentworth writes sogars, sougar, 113. Jones, 1701, besides the ordinary words without -l- mentions Mulgrave, pronounced Mograve.

* The pronunciation of should and would without -l- may be due to absence of stress in the sentence. I have noted the following early examples:—shudd, Elyot's Gouvernour 70, 1531, shudd, Gabr. Harvey, Letters, 3, shud, Cary Verney, Verney Mem. ii. 71 (twice), 1642, wode 'would', Lady Sussex, ibid. iii. 103, wood, W. Roades, ibid. iii. 275; Isaac Walton, in Aubrey's Lives ii. 15; sha't is written for shalt, Congreve's Way of the World, Act i, Sc. ix (1700).

At the present time soldier is no longer pronounced without l, though I knew an old cavalry officer, now dead, born about 1817, who always said [sødʒa], and the same old gentleman also pronounced falcon as [fɔkæn], and spoke of having followed the sport of [fɔkænri] in his youth.

The 'restoration' of l in these words is a modern refinement. Swone of Surrey and Machyn, two extremes of the social scale, has passed into the limbo of forgotten pronunciations, and I have not found the form in the following centuries, though it may well have existed.

I have noted two interesting examples of the loss of l in unstressed

1 A much earlier example occurs in Ayenbite (1340), haf 'behalf', p. 190 in E.E.T.S. Edition. Another example is found in 1483—the fyrst haf yere, Regist. Annal. Coll. Mert., p. 64.

* See Appendix IV.
changes in consonantal sounds:—sepukyr, Gregory 283, and
hosteries ‘hostelries’, Lord Berners, i. 77. Aubrey writes Marybon
‘Marylebone’, Lives, i. 67.

The chief interest for our present purpose concerning this consonant
lies in the conditions under which the sound is lost or retained.
The quality of the sound itself varies in different dialects. In Received
Standard, at any rate in the South, the sound has a very weak consonantal
character—that of a weakly articulated point-open consonant, generally
voiced, but unvoiced after another voiceless consonant, e.g. in fright,
pride, &c. = [frait, pjad]; in the true Regional dialects of the South—
from East to West—it is, or was until quite lately, an inverted point-
open, rather more strongly consonantal than in Received Standard; in
Northumberland, and among isolated individuals all over the country,
a back -r, with slight trilling of the uvula, is heard; in Scotland the sound
is a strong point-trill.
The conditions under which the sound is retained or lost in Received
Standard are the following:—it is retained: initially, and when preceded
by another consonant, before vowels—run, grass; in the middle of words
between vowels—starry, hearing, &c.; and, though this is not always
true of the speech of the younger generation, at the end of words when
the next word begins with a vowel and there is no pause in the sentence
between the words—for ever, over all, her ear, &c.

R is lost:—in the middle of a word before all other consonants—hard,
horse, bird = [hād, hās, bād], &c., &c.; at the end of words unless the next
word in the sentence begins with a vowel.

There is evidence that r was lost in the South, before consonants, at
least as early as the fifteenth century, and it will be noted that so far as
the occasional spellings, and, very rarely, the rhymes, throw light, it is lost
earliest before -s, -sh.
The following is the evidence I have collected, covering the period
from the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries inclusive. Bokenam (1441)
rhymes adust—wurst, St. Lucy 60 and 61; in the Will of J. Buckland,
1450, cf. Linc. Dioc. Docs., p. 41. 15, the spelling Red wosted quishens
occurs; Cely Papers has passell ‘parcel’, pp. 31, 178, and the word
master is written marster, p. 156, and farther for father, p. 83; Gregory
has mosselle, 234, ‘morsel’; church rhymes with such, Rede me, &c., 39,
(1528); skaselye ‘scarcely’, Robinson’s transl. of Sir T. More’s Utopia
(1556), skasely, Sir T. Seymour (1544), State Papers, Hen. VIII, vol. i,
p. 781; Machyn (1550-2) writes Woseter, 46, Dasset ‘Dorset’, 48, 57;
Masseisay ‘Marshalsea’, 255, &c.; Surrey, in Tottel’s Misc., rhymes /urst—
dust, first—must; Roper (1578), in his Life of Sir T. More, writes farther
for father (this work not published till 1626 in Paris); dryardes ‘dryads’
occurs, p. 14, in Laneham’s Ltr. (1575); John Alleyne, posshene
‘portion’, Alleyne Papers, 16, 159—?; Sir Edm. Verney (the Standard
Bearer) writes Folescue and Follescuce ‘Fortescue’ (1635-6), Verney Papers,
p. 170; the Verney Memoirs have the following spellings:—from vol. ii:
quater ‘quarter’, M. Faulkner, 54 (1642), doset ‘Dorset’, Lady Sussex
(1642), 102, Senetabornes ‘St. Albans’, where clearly no r was pro-

1 Wusschuppe occurs in Stonor Prs. ii, 111 (1480).
nounced, Lady Sussex, 155 (1642), passons 'persons'. Mrs. Isham, 203 (1642), 'my sister Alport's' = 'Alport's', Lady V., 245 (1646), wood 'word', Mall V., 380 (1647), just 'first'. Mrs. Isham, 200, 208 (1642); vol. iii: Pasterne = 'Paston', Sir R. V., 244 (1655), 'no father then Oxford', Sir R. V., 292 (1656); vol. iv: quater, Doll Leake, 113 (1665), drawers = 'draws', Dick Hals, 307 (1674). Cooper (1685) says that busted represents the pronunciation ofworsted. Jones (1701) indicates the pronunciation minus r in Wooster, hash, mash for 'harsh', 'marsh'. Lady Wentworth (1705–11) writes Gath, 63, 271, for the name of the physician Garth, and other correspondents write Albermal Street, 274, extraordinary, 321, Dotchester, 153, Author = 'Arthur', 77, 398, 399, Duke of Molbery, 113, &c. The spelling Dowger = 'Dowager', 464, shows that the symbol r might be written without being pronounced. Baker, in Rules for True Spelling, &c., 1724, says that nurse, purse, thirsty, Ursula, sarsanet are pronounced nus, pus, thusty* Usly, sasnet. Jespersen quotes German writers on English pronunciation of 1718 and 1748, who assert that r is not pronounced in mari, parlour, partridge, thirsty, but says that Walker in 1775 is the first Englishman to admit the muteness of -r'. In Bertram's Royal English-Danish Grammar, 1753, r is said to be 'mute' in Marlborough, harsh, purse. Batchelor, 1809, speaking of the vowel in burn, says it is difficult to ascertain what portion of the sound belongs to r, as the vowel appears before -r to be only slightly different from that of u in nostrum. In other words, the vowel is lengthened and the r-sound has disappeared.

In the more rustic forms of English, r before consonants retained a more or less strong consonantal quality longer than in the East. This is indicated by such a spelling as morun 'morn', Shillingford, p. 6, and baron 'barn', in the Will of R. Astbroke (Bucks.), Linc. Dioc. Docs. 167, 35 (1534). At the end of the fifteenth century, Cr. Duke of York has sundery, 389, and therell 'the earl', 392. To summarize the above evidence, it would appear that the weakening and disappearance of r before another consonant, especially, at first, before [s, f], had taken place by the middle of the fifteenth century at any rate in Essex and Suffolk; that a hundred years later London speakers of the humbler sort (Machyn), as well as more highly placed and better educated persons in various walks of life, pronounced the sound but slightly, if at all; that the tendency is more and more marked, not only before [s, f], but before other consonants also, until by the middle of the next century it seems that the pronunciation among the upper classes (the Verneys and their relatives) was very much the same as at present. The later evidence, from the eighteenth century onwards, confirms this view.

It will be observed that the eighteenth-century pronunciations [nas, pas], &c., which are clearly foreshadowed in the rhymes of Bokenam, and later of Surrey, the Verneys, &c., have been ousted by another type [päs, näs, &c.], in which the r was not lost until after lengthening had taken place. The modern semi-humorous vulgarisms, written cuss, bust for curse, burst, represent the older type. The lack of confirmation from the fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Orthoepists of the loss of r before consonants has no significance, since many people at the present time are

1 The rhyme after—carter in Rede me, &c., 119, must represent [kã—kãta], and at least shows that r was not pronounced in the latter word.


3 Note also harem 'harm', and teram 'term', Lady Hungerford, pp. 255, 256 (1570).
unable to realize that they no longer pronounce -r- in this position, being obsessed by the spelling.

Note.—The spelling dace, the name of the fish, shows that r must have been lost early before -s; Dame Jul. Berners, however (1496), still has darse in Wynkyn de Worde’s print of her Treatise of Eysshynge.

Loss of Final -r.

I have very little early evidence regarding this, but have noted the spelling Harflew in Bp. Pecok’s Repressor (1449), i. 258, and in Shakespeare’s Hen. V, First Fol., ii. i; Lady Wentworth’s spellings, Operer, 66, Bavarioir, 90, Lord Carburer = Carbery, must express the sound [ə] in the final syllable, and indicate that an -r in this position expressed no consonantal sound.

The vowel murmur [ə], developed from the suffixes -er, -or, &c., as in better [ˈbetə], may probably be regarded as a simple weakening of a syllabic -r, which is still heard in provincial dialects. There are occasional spellings in which the termination is written without a vowel:—remembr, Sir J. Fortescue, 124, 125, undr, ibid, 135, and Dr. Knight’s modre, 1512, Ellis ii. i, probably indicate [remembr, undr, müdr] respectively.

Development of Murmur-vowel after Long Vowel + r.

After old long vowels and diphthongs formerly followed by -r we have now [ə], the long vowel being partially shortened—thus bear, hear, fire become [bər, heir, firə]. It was formerly supposed that, as in the instances just considered, the murmur-vowel was merely a weakening of -r. There is reason, however, to suppose that [ə] developed between the vowel or diphthong and the following -r, before the loss of the latter.

The following sixteenth-century spellings appear to prove this:—Anne Boleyn (1528), I desyerd, desyer, requyer, all on p. 306, Ellis i. i; Sir Thos. Elyot, hiare ‘to hire’, Vb., i. 113; Will of Sir J. Digby (1533), Leic., Linc. Dioc. Docs. 147, 16, desyoryng; Gabriel Harvey’s Letters (1572–80), devower, 128, fyer ‘fire’, 130, yowers ‘yours’, 139; Countess of Shrewsbury, Letter, Ellis ii. 2. 66, duaring (1581); Q. Elizabeth, I desiar, Letters to James VI, 13, and Transl. 122, hiar ‘hear’, Tr. 76, fiars ‘fires’, Transl. 76. Of these possibly hiar might be questioned, the ia might be put for ea, but the others, I think, quite certainly point to [əər, ʊər, ʊəər]. I have not pursued the investigation farther, and can only offer one example of such a spelling in the seventeenth century, desiar, Cary Verney, in Verney Mem. ii. 68 (1642). Dr. Watts, True Riches, has the couplet—

Or she sits at Fancy’s door
Calling shapes and shadows to her

where it is evident the rhyme is [dʊə—tʊə]. Baker, 1724, Rules for True Spelling, says words ending -re are pronounced as though with -ur, fire, hire, mire, &c. = [fəər], &c.

Metathesis of r.

In Received Standard we use many metathesized forms, such as wright O.E. wyrhta, through O.E. þerh, wrought O.E. worht, third O.E. bridda.
The metathesized forms are probably E. Midland (Norfolk and Suffolk) in origin, to judge by M.E. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries other metathesized forms besides those heard to-day were in use, thus Marg. Paston has *drust* 'durst', ii. 191; Cr. of Duke of York a Knight of the Garter, *wrothey* 'worthly', 399; Peter Wentworth, *crub'd* 'curbed', W. Papers 236, 1712; *gurge* 'grudge' occurs in 1515, State of Ireland, State Papers, Hen. VIII, ii, p. 23; *brust* 'burst', G. Harvey's Letters 33, 1573–80; Queen Elizabeth, *shirlest* 'shriillest', Transl. 46.

On the other hand, *thorf* 'through' is written by Marg. Paston, ii. 197; 'a silke *gridyll*', Will of Sir T. Comberworth (Lincs.), Linc. Dioc. Docs. 50, 6, and *strike* 'stirk', ibid. 50, 5 (1451), and *thrid* in Rewle of Sust. Men. 107, 36, and *Kyrstemes* 'Christmas' in Cely Papers 22 (1479).

Cooper notes that *r* is sounded after *o* in *apron*, *citron*, *environ*, *gridiron*, *iron*, *saffron*, 'as though written *apurn*, &c.' He also notes the very common sixteenth- and seventeenth-century form *hundred* as being pronounced 'facilitatis causa'. Baker, *Rules for True Spelling* (1724), transcribes *apron* as *apurn*, Katherine as *Katlurn*, saffron as *saffurn*. The Wentworth Papers have *Kathern*, Lady Strafford, 305 (1712), *childern*, Peter W., 68 (1709), *Chirstmas* [kæstməs], Lord Wentworth (a child), 462 (1730).

With regard to the general question of the loss of *r* medially, before consonants, and finally, a curious passion for eye-rhymes long obtained among poets, and to some extent still exists.

To describe such rhymes as *higher*—*Thalia* or *morning*—*dawning* as *Cockney rhymes* is foolish and inaccurate. The former is made by Keats, the latter by so fastidious a poet and gentleman as Mr. Swinburne. This prejudice is gradually dying out among poets. If this or that poet still dislikes and avoids such rhymes, perfect though they be according to normal educated English pronunciation, simply on account of the *r* in the spelling, that is his affair and his readers need not complain. If they are objected to on the ground that the rhyme is not perfect, and that it is only in vulgar pronunciation that -*r* - is not heard in *morn*, &c., this is not consonant with fact.

**Loss or Assimilation of Various Consonants in Combination.**

**Loss of *a* before and after other cons.**


*See Appendix IV.*
Lord Rochester (died 1680), rhymes wounds—lampoons. Vanbrugh, in *Journey to London*, 1726, makes Lady Arabella say gud soons = wounds; Jones, 1701—*Wensday*, and omits *d* in intends, commands, &c.; Lady Wentworth writes *Wensday* twice, 1724, notes absence of *d* in hansone. Jones also says that *d* is not pronounced in landlord, landlady, friendly, handmaid, candle, chandler, dandle, handle, kindle, fondle, and other words in *-ndl-*. Further, in children (= [tsfdn]).

The pronunciation of London as [lanan], which persisted among polite speakers far into the nineteenth century, deserves a few words. The process was probably [landn—lann—lanan]—the assimilation of *-d-* when flanked by *n*. The earliest examples I have found are from Mrs. Basire, who writes Lonan, pp. 133, 135, 137 (1654), and Lonant, 147 (1656). Gray, in a letter to Horace Walpole (July 11, 1757), says 'if you will be vulgar and pronounce it Lunnun... I can't help it'.

Elphinston, in his works from 1765 to 1787, says 'we generally hear Lunnun'. I am now able to cite a still earlier example of this type. Gill, *Logonom. (1621) 14. 2*, writes Lunun for the pronunciation which he attributes to 'postmen'—*tabellarii*.

**Loss of *-t-** before and after other consonants.

St. Editha—fonstone = 'font-stone'; Marg. Paston—morgage, i. 69. 1448; Machyn—Brenford 'Brentford', 57; Q. Elizabeth—attemps, Ltrrs. to J. VI, 23, accidens, ibid. 23, offen 'often', 39; Edw. Alleyne has wascote, Alleyne Mem. 26. 1593; Verney Pprs.—wascott 'waistcoat', Mrs. Poulney, 261. 1639; Christmas, Lady Sussex, 205. 1639; Verney Mem.—crismus, Doll Leake, iii. 287. 1656; Coven Garden, Cary V., ii. 64. 1642; Sir Philip Warwick, Memoires of Charles I—busting 'busting', p. 141. 1701; Lady Wentworth—Crismass, 66. 1708, Westminster, 62, crismed, 62, Taufs = 'Tofs', the singer, 66; Shasbury = Shaftsbury, 59, 198. Jones notes loss of *-t-* in the pronunciation of Christmas, costly, ghastly, ghostly, Eastcheap, lastly, beastly, breastplate, gristle, bristle, whistle, &c.; listless, mostly, roast beef, waistband, wristband, christen, fasten, glisten, &c., and further in col's foot, maltster, saltpetre, saltcellar, Wiltshire.

Most of the above pronunciations may still be heard in rapid unstudied speech; to some, such as the omission of *t* in mostly, roast beef, &c., purists might object. It is interesting to note that Q. Elizabeth pronounced *often* without a *t*, as do good speakers at the present time. The pronunciation [ɔftn, oftn], now not infrequently heard, is a new-fangled innovation.

**Loss of *b* between other consonants; also between another consonant and a vowel.**

I have only noted a few examples of this:—assemblyd, Cely Pprs. 145; tremlyng, Cavendish, L. of Wolsey 234. 1557; nimlest 'nimblest', Q. Elizabeth, Ltrrs. to J. VI, 29. Camerwell occurs in a memo. of sale of a house, Alleyne Mem. 83. 1607.

Machyn has Cammerell 'Camberwell', 300. The loss of *-w-** before an unstressed syllable is normal (see p. 296). Lameth 'Lambeth' occurs in a letter of Cranmer, 1534 (see p. 304, below). This particular form may well be mentioned here.
DROPPING OF FINAL CONSONANTS

Loss of -n + consonant.

Westmyster, Gregory's Chron. 142, and passim, 1450–70; Westmester, Short Engl. Chron., passim, 1465; Westmester, Cr. Knt. of Bath, L. and Pprs. i. 388. 1493; Wasmester, Mrs. Basire, 140 (1655); both Jones, 1701, and Baker, 1724, indicate Westmuster as the pronunciation.

Milton writes governmet in autograph MS., Com. 25.

Loss of -n- after a vowel followed by a consonant.

Son y lawe 'son-in-law', Marg. Paston, ii. 195; Sune elaw, Machyn, 303. mallicholie (twice), Shakespeare, L. L. L., Act iv, Sc. iii, said by Berowne.

Loss of Final Consonants.

The omission of final consonants, especially -t, -d after another consonant, but also occasionally after vowels, and, to a less extent, of other final consonants, seems to have been a common practice among all classes far into the eighteenth century. Most of these final consonants have now been restored in the usage of educated speech.

Apart from combinative treatment, in which respect our natural rapid speech does not greatly differ from that of earlier centuries, in dropping final consonants before another word beginning with a consonant—[rousbif, bishil], &c.—the loss of -b after -m- (lamb, &c.) is the principa. survival of the tendency to eliminate final consonants, once so widespread.

Loss of -d.

blyn 'blind', Norf. Guilds 35. 1389; 'God of Hevene sene 3ou', &c. = 'send', Constable of Dynevor Castle, temp. Hen. IV, Ellis ii. x. 16; husbon, Marg. Paston i. 42, hunder, do. ii. 201; my Lor, Cely Pprs. 63; Edwar the iii, Gregory 223; rebowne 'rebound', Rede me, &c.; blyne 'blind', Machyn, 105, cole harber 'cold-', do. 74; yron Mowle 'mould', Euphues 152, ole drudge 'old', ibid. 317; Verney Mem.—fritten P.P., ii. 53. 1642; Cooper gives thouzn as the pronunciation of thousand; Lady Wentworth has poun 'pound', 62, thousand, 55, Sunderlin 'Sunder­land', 118, own 'owned', 93; her son Peter writes (1710) Richmon, scaffels 'scaffold', 110, Northumberlain, 418; Jones notes ' the sound of n, written -nd, when it may be sounded in almond, beyond, Desmond, despond, diamond (cf. Lady W.'s dyemons, 57), Edmond, Ostend, Ray­mond, riband, Richmond, waisband, wristband, scaffold, Oswald', &c.; Baker, 1714, says that almond is pronounced almun.

Loss of -t.

 Seynt Johan be babitis, Norf. Guilds 27. 1389; nex, Marg. Paston, ii. 82, &c.; except, Cely Pprs. 58, nex, ibid. 68; Braban, Gregory's Chron. 80; uprigh, Reception of Cath. of Aragon, Ltrrs. and Pprs. ii. 415. 1503; Beamon 'Beaumont', Lord Berners, i. 21. 1520; Egype, Machyn, 262; prompe, Ascham, Tox. 26 and 39; stricklier, W. Norris, Alleyne Pprs. 35. 1608; Verney Pprs.—respecks, Mr. Wiseman, 143. 1629; respeck, Mrs. Isham, 262. Verney Mem. have the following:—gretis (Superl.), Lady Sussex, ii. 123, Papeses 'Papists', Mrs. Isham, iii. 230. 1655, honis 'honest', Lady Hobart, iv. 52. 1664; Mundy nex, Mall V., ii. 380. 1647; nex, Lady Rochester (Sussex), iii. 467. 1660; respeck, x
CHANGES IN CONSONANTAL SOUNDS

According to Jones, 1701, -t is omitted at the end of rapt, script, abrupt, bankrupt, corrupt, manuscript; distinct, strict, direct, afflict, reflect, respect, sect, &c., &c. He gives the pronunciation of pageant as pagin, or pageen.

Elphinston says that t cannot be clearly heard in distinct, but has not quite disappeared in distinctly.

Loss of final -t.
kerchys 'kerchiefs', Bokenam, St. Cecil. 862. 1441; kersche and nekkerchys, M. Paston, ii. 342. 1469; Sant Towleys 'St. Olaves', Machyn, 118; masties 'mastiffs', G. Harvey's Lttrs. 18. 1573-80; Marston—handkerchers, Ant. and Mell., Pt. ii, Act ii, Sc. i, 1602; masty, Middleton's Trick to Catch the Old One, i. 4 (1608); handkerchers, Lady Brill. Harley, 1641: Lady Sussex—baly, Verney Mem. ii. 156. 1642; Baker, 1724—handkercher, mastee 'mastiff'; Jones, 1701—mastee, balee, hussee, or hussy 'housewife'.

Loss of final -b.
We no longer pronounce -b in comb, lamb, jamb, &c., nor in inflected forms of these words before a vowel, such as combing, lambing, &c. On the other hand, we have restored the b in Lambeth, originally Lambyth with the South-Eastern or Kentish form of O.E. hyb, a landing-place or wharf. As early as 1418 Archbishop Chichele writes Lamothy, Ellis i. 1. 5; and in 1534 a letter from Archbishop Cranmer, though not, unfortunately, preserved in his own handwriting, contains the form Lameth, Ellis iii. 2. 319; lameskynnes occurs in Rewle of Sustr. Men., 1450. 49; to come it = 'comb', Pen. Verney, V. Mem. ii. 177. 1642.

In limb and thumb the b is unhistorical, the O.E. forms being lim, þuma. The explanation of the spelling in these two words may possibly be that the final -b was once pronounced, having been developed according to the tendencies illustrated on p. 309, below.

Loss of Consonants between Vowels, or after Consonants before a following Vowel.

Loss of open consonants.
St. Editha, 1420—senty 'seventy', 414, swene = sweden 'dream', 906, godmores 'godmothers', 2215, pament 'pavement', 2027; Caxton, Jason—pament, 166. 27. 1477; Machyn—Denshyre, 39, Lussam 'Lewisham'; Marston—I marle 'marvel', E. Hoe 3. 2. 1605; Jones gives Dantry as the pronunciation of Daventry; Cary Stewkley—senet 'seven nights, se'nnight', Verney Mem. iv. 434. 1656; Aubrey, Lives (1669-96), has Shrineham 'Shrivenham' Berks., ii. 47, Clark's Ed.
Loss of d between vowels.

The form la'ship for ladyship occurs in Congreve's Way of the World, Act iii, Sc. iv, said by a mincing waiting-woman, and in Tom Jones, said by Mrs. Honour, Sophia Western's waiting-woman. As this is the only evidence I can produce for this form, it is probably to be regarded as a vulgarism.

Loss of h + t.

We must distinguish between the treatment of the combination -ht—
(a) when preceded by original front vowels, e.g. in night, light, &c., and
(b) when preceded by back vowels, e.g. in daughter, bought, &c.

In the former case the sound represented by -h- disappeared in Southern English at least as early as the fifteenth century, in spite of the statements of some of the seventeenth-century Orthoepists; in the latter case there were two developments—(1) total disappearance of the consonant before -t, and (2) a change to the sound -f-. The latter development is treated above, p. 288.

The disappearance of the consonant is shown in the occasional spellings, both by the omission of the letter -h- in words where it belongs historically, and by the introduction of -h- or -gh- in words where no sound ever existed between the vowel and the following -t—wright for 'write', abought for 'about'.

(a) Loss of h before t when preceded by a front vowel.

Curiously enough, the earliest proofs I have found of the disappearance of the consonant—here a front-open-voiceless [j]—in the combination -ight, consist of the introduction of the consonantal symbols where they do not historically belong. In the following list the two types of spelling are enumerated indiscriminately, in chronological order, since they both go to establish the same thing.


(b) Loss of -h+ t when preceded by a back vowel.

My evidence for this is earlier than for (a). Already in the thirteenth century broure 'brought' is found in Lajamon, and naut 'naught' in Hali Meidenhed, 1225, dowlter 'daughter' in Songs and Carols, 1400, while the spelling foghte 'foot' is found in W. of Shoreham.

Marg. Paston has kawt 'caught', i. 110, 1450, abought 'about', ii. 29, 1461, ought 'out', ii. 341, 1469, abought, ii. 362, 1499; dowltyr, Cely Papers 105; Henry VIII writes abought in 1515, Ellis i. 1. 126; Elyot's Gouernour—dought 'doubt', i. 35, cloughts, i. 247; Gabr. Harvey—droute 'drought', Lttrs. 72, and thoal 'thought', ibid. 15; J. Alleyn, Alleyn Pprs.—dater, datter, p. 15, 159—; Anne Denton, Verney Mem. iii. 73—dater 'daughter', 1650; Wm. Roades, V. Mem.
D. Addition of Consonants.

Development of w- initially before M.E. ð³.

The word one and its old Gen. the Adv. once [wan], &c., are curiosities in Received Standard, being the only forms of their kind. The normal development of O.E. an is heard in on-ly and al-one, and it is evident that the corresponding form of one [on] was in use in the Standard English of the seventeenth century, alongside the other type, that from which our present form is derived. The pronunciation [wan] or its equivalent, at any rate a pronunciation with initial w-, seems to be the sole form now in use in stressed positions in the various rustic dialects apart from those of the North, which are [en, jen], &c. In some it is, no doubt, indigenous, in most it must have been borrowed from Received Standard.

The development of the form [wan] is not altogether easy to follow. It is certain, however, that it owes its main feature—the initial ‘w’—to what is called a strong rounded on-glide, which in time became a definite independent lip-back consonant. It is strange that this word should be the sole survivor of its type in Received Standard, strange also that it is not recognized in the official spelling. The first point may strike us as yet more remarkable when we call to mind the words only and alone, which, though almost completely isolated from their parent by form and meaning, were formerly closely associated with it by both of these ties; the second is the more astonishing when we note that a very similar tendency which overtook ð preceded by h- (in holy, hot), &c., actually has been recorded in the orthodox system of spelling in the words whole, whore, although no trace of any lip consonant (w) survives in any form of Standard English, in any words of this class. But although at the present time there is only one word which retains the w-type which began originally with ð-, and none originally beginning with ho-, we shall see that down well into the seventeenth century at least, other words, as one would expect, also show this type of pronunciation, so far as can be judged by the occasional spellings.

We may well ask where our solitary [wan] came from, and to a great extent Echo answers—where? From what Regional dialect the tendency arose we cannot say at present.

The earliest spelling of the wone form I have found so far is in St. Editha (Wilts.), and other instances of the w- spellings in this and other words will be found below from other fifteenth-century texts of Westerly origin. But do we seek to draw any conclusions from this, behold the Cely Papers, in the same century, written for the most part by Essex people, also furnish examples. Still it is true that most of my fifteenth-century examples are from texts written in the West of England, and we may make what we can of that fact. If we turn to the facts of the Modern dialects, as they are recorded in Wright's Engl. Dial. Gr., they do not, I think, point to anything definite—the w-forms of words like oats, &c., seem to be peppered about, more or less at random, among the Regional dialects. This, like so many other problems of its kind, will never be
settled by limiting our investigation to the Modern dialects. Not until we know much more than is known at present of the details of the distribution of dialectal peculiaries in the M.E. period and in the fifteenth century will these questions be solved.

The words of which I have found spellings with \( w- \) before original initial \( o \) are M.E. 'oon,' 'oonly,' 'oath'; while those with an initial \( h- \) of which I have found \( wh- \) spellings are 'hoot,' 'home,' 'hoot.' I put them into two separate lists.

**Forms with \( w- \) of 'one,' &c., 'oath,' &c.**

St. Editha, 1420—'won,' 1835, 2302, 3086, 3103; 'wonlyche,' 3529, 'wothe,' 2100; Audelay's Poems, 1426—'won,' p. 38; Exeter Tailors' Guild, 1466—'won,' 322, 'woth,' 322; Cely Pprs., 1475—'whon,' 33, 'whone,' 24, 'one' (the Celys often write \( \text{wh} \)- for \( \text{w}- \), cf. p. 313); Cely Pprs.—'wolde' 'old,' 22, 1479; Henry VIII, Letters, Ellis i. 1—'won,' p. 126, 1515, and 'won,' 'woon,' i. 2. 130, 1544; Thos. Pery, Letters—'woone,' Ellis ii. 2. 140, 143, 1549; Latimer's Sermons—'such a wone,' 5, 7, 32; Machyn, 1550–63—'whon,' 125; Q. Elizabeth, Transl.—'won,' 74, 'wons,' 4, 1593; W. Faunte, Alleyne Pprs.—'such a wone,' p. 32, 159—; Verney Mem.—'a meane wan,' Sir R. V. ii. 76, 1642; 'won's' 'one's,' Lady Sydenham, u. 100, 1642; Wentw. Pprs., Lady Strafford—'won,' 213, 214, 1711, 280, 1712. Cooper, 1685, includes 'wuts' 'oats' among his list of dialectal forms.

**Forms with \( \text{whö}, \&c., \text{for old hö}.**

St. Editha—'wholle' 'whole,' 3368; Bp. Bekinton, 1442—'whome' 'home,' Lttrs., p. 80; Syr Degrevant—'whome,' l. 929; Sir J. Fortescue—'whome,' 153; Rede—'me,' &c.; 1528—'whore,' 'whoredom,' passim, 'whoate,' 51, 'hot,' 'whole,' 'wholy,' 61, 'wholines,' 85, 86, 'wholy' 'holy,' 116, &c.; Latimer's Sermons—'whomlye,' 134, 'whore,' 'whoredom,' 160; Lever's Sermon—'whot' 'hot,' 126, 1550; Ascham, Scholemaster—'wholie' 'wholly,' 92, 1563–8; Lord Burghley, Letters—'whott' 'hot,' Ellis ii. 3. 99, 1582; Sir Thos. Smith, Rep. Angl.—'whot,' 70, 1565; Peele, Edw. I, Malone Soc.—'whot,' 2389, 'whote,' 1212, 1591; Q. Elizabeth, Lttrs. J. VI—'wholy,' 27, 1593; Spenser—'whott,' F. Q., Bk. ii. Cant. v. 18; Mulcaster, 1583—'more ignorance writeth so unwarnieole whole for hole which (ought) to begin with h-,' 'Elementarie,' p. 155; Henry Verney, V. Mem. ii. 355, 356, writes 'whome' 'home,' 1647.

Cooper, 1685, notes 'hwutter' 'hotter' as belonging to 'barbarous dialect' and to be avoided.

The Combination \( \text{sö}^3 \) becomes 'swö'; 'scou-' [sku] becomes [skwö-].

Bp. Pecok's Repressor, 1449, has the form 'swope' 'soap,' i. 127. This must be regarded as a purely Regional form of a type which apparently never got a footing in the London dialect or in Common Literary English. Pecok's English is decidedly Western in type, in so far as it departs from the London form.

Cooper records the pronunciation 'squurge,' 'scourge,' 'facilitatis causa.'

**Survival of [ön] for one.**

Note the older type in rhymes:—Sackville 'one-stone,' one 'moan'; Shakespeare with 'bone' and 'gone'; Cowley with 'grown'; Lady Winchilsea with 'alone,' and Dryden with 'thrown.' Mrs. Eure, Verney Papers (1639), p. 230, has the inverted spelling 'my one' 'own.' Cooper (1685) says one
and own are alike. Wallis (1653) gives ‘ō rotundum’ in one, as in pole, boat, oat. Writing Scholar’s Companion (1690) says wun is vulgar.

ō₁- initially becomes wō [wʊ]; hō₁- becomes whō [whʊ-].

Whatever may be the case in Regional dialects, the instances are rare in the London dialect and Literary English. I have noted wother ‘other’, Rede me, &c., 1528, 22, 27, 32, &c.; also in a letter from Thos. Pery, Ellis ii. 2. 146, 1539.

Under this heading may be mentioned Wolster ‘Ulster’, St. of Ireland, St. Pprs. Hen. VIII, p. 7, 1515.


Development of y [j] initially before Front Vowels.

A certain number of words occur written with y- in various writers, between the fifteenth and eighteenth centuries inclusive. I do not propose to deal with M.E. forms here. This feature is perhaps more characteristic of the Western dialects, but traces of it are found in Cely Papers, and it penetrates into the London dialect and the Received Standard of the sixteenth and following centuries. One form—yearth—as will be seen from the particulars below, is very persistent, and may perhaps be regarded as a Kentish or South-Eastern form originally—cf. M.E. (Kentish) yerthe, &c., where ye represents the old diphthong eo. I have noted the following examples of y- forms:

St. Editha—jende ‘end’, l. 1846; Coventry Leet Bk., 1430, jenere ‘every’, p. 131; Bokenam—jorth ‘earth’; Shillingford—jelry ‘early’, 16, jyen ‘even’, 16, jesse ‘ease’, 40; Cely Papers—jelles ‘ells’; Recept. Cath. of Ar., 1501—jest ‘east’, Littrs. and Pprs. i. 394; Thos. Pery—yending, Ellis ii. 2. 140, 1539; Latimer’s Serm.—yere ‘ere’, 56, yearth ‘earth’, 52; Edw. VI, First P. B.—yer ‘ere’, Joh. viii, yearth, Venite, Te Deum, &c., &c.; Machyn has yerl ‘early’ frequently throughout his Diary; Lever’s Serm., 1550—yeart, 43, yeartyth, 61; Butler, 1634, warns against yer ‘ere’ and yerst ‘erst’; Mall Verney—yearnessly, V. Mem. ii. 381, 1647; Mrs. Isham—yeare ‘ear’, V. Mem. iv. 118. 1665; Cooper, 1685, puts yerb ‘herb’ and yeart under his forms which illustrate ‘Barbarous Dialect’.; a holl in her yeare, Lady Gardiner, Later V. Letters i. 44 (1699); in 1749 (Letter 195), Lord Chesterfield mentions yearth as an example of the pronunciation of the Vulgar Man, which ‘carries the mark of the beast along with it’; Goldsmith, in the Essay ‘Of Various Clubs’, Busybody, 1759, makes a Club member tell a story of what a noble Lord said to him—‘There’s no man on the face of the yearth’, &c.; young Squire Malford, in Humphrey Clinker, 1771, writes yearl ‘earl’ (in italics) in a letter, evidently indicating a contemporary pronunciation which he did not use himself; Elphinston, 1787, mentions yearth and yerb as current both in Scotland and England, though not in good usage.

It is evident that some of these forms were once fairly widespread, and that not only in provincial usage. At the present time, the only one which still survives among good speakers is year for ear, and that is fast becoming archaic, and is heard less and less.
Addition of Final and Medial Consonants

Addition of Consonants.

Finally, especially after -r, -n, -m, -l, -s, -f.


Addition of Parasitic Consonants between Groups of Consonants.

Introduction of -w- (a lip-glide) between Consonant and following Rounded Vowel.

St. Editha has twoile, 2274, 2277; Cely Pprs. have apwoynlyd, 116, pwoyntement, 71; Bury Wills, gwory, 84 (1501); Butler, 1634, gives pronunciation bwoë for ‘boy’; Wallis, 1653, says that after p and b, before o, w is pronounced, but not by all speakers, nor in all words—pwoil ‘pot’, bwoil ‘boil’, bwoy ‘boy’.
Lady Wentworth writes twilet ‘toilette’ = [twəlɪt], perhaps in imitation of French pronunciation.

Development of front-glide between g-, k-, and following Front Vowel.

This may be expressed by Lady Hobart’s spelling gearl = [gərəl], V. Mem. iv. 54, 1644, but I give the form tentatively.
Wallis, 1653, says that can, get, begin are pronounced cyan, gyel, begyn.

Elphinston affirms that kyind, gyide, and the introduction of ‘y’ before the vowel in sky, can, card, skirt, guard, &c., are essential to a polite pronunciation. Walker, 1801, is very definite about the introduction of a ‘fluent, liquid sound after k, c, or g hard before a and i, which gives a smooth and elegant sound to . . . and which distinguishes the polite conversation of London from that of every other part of the island’. Walker expresses the pronunciation referred to by the spellings ke-ind, ke-ard, rege-ard. The words ‘which require the liquid sound’ are:—sky, kind, guide, gird, girt, girl, guise, guile, card, cart, cap, carpenter, carnal, cartridge, guard, regard.

I used to hear the pronunciations [kjad, gjadn], &c., as a boy, from a very near relation of mine, a most fastidious speaker, a lady born in 1802, who died in 1886. (Note in card, &c., the glide developed while a still represented a front vowel; in kind, &c., it must have developed at some stage such as [kæind < kjæind].)

Aspiration of Initial Vowels, popularly called ‘putting in an h’.

The ‘incorrect’ aspiration of initial vowels, one of the commonest of vulgarisms, appears to be confined not merely to stressed words or syllables, but chiefly to those which have extra-strong stress in the sentence. It is rarely heard before words that are weakly stressed. The habit seems always to have been considered a vulgarism, and the few examples I have recorded are nearly all from provincial sources, or from the writings of persons who otherwise show signs of defective education and vulgar habits of speech. Norf. Guilds have herthe ‘earth’, 35, a garland of hoke leaves, 117, &c. Another considerable number of instances occur in St. Editha (1420). These are:—howzi ‘out’, 54, Hyryssche ‘Irish’, 48, hyeyndyne ‘ending’, 1, hendu, 515, heylche ‘early’, 270, hynon ‘eyes’, 1892, hevulle ‘evil’, 32, 34, Hyronesye ‘Ionside’, 3279, harme ‘arm’, 4129. Bokenam has herand ‘errand’, 1581, and hangyr ‘anger’, Ag. 485. The Will of Sir T. Cumberworth, Lincs., 1451, has haske Vb., Linc. Dioc. Docs. 49.13; Gregory’s Chron., hasche (the tree), 200; Cely Papers, howilde ‘old’, 48; Marg. Paston, howyn ‘own’, i. 438, hour ‘our’, i. 439, howeth ‘oweth’, ii. 26, 461, haskyd, ii. 26, hondyrsionde, ii. 32, the hone ‘the
one', ii. 62, hewers 'ewers', ii. 75, herand, ii. 215. Machyn furnishes
more examples than any other source, and has one excellent instance of
the $h$- occurring in a strongly stressed word at the end of a sentence—
'a gret dener as I haue be hat 'at', p. 2, which might be said at the
present time by a certain kind of speaker, has, 139, hundershaft, 116,
harme (of the body), 85, haskyd, 205, hanswered, 242, hetten 'eaten', 16,
hoyth 'oath', 25, herit 'earth', 6, here 'ear', 40, Hambrose, 48. John
Alleyn has hersnest 'earnest', Alleyn Papers 16, 159—

Lady Sydenham writes hobblegashons 'obligations', Verney Mem. ii. 125.

The evidence, such as it is, does not point to this habit being very
widespread before the eighteenth century. The grammarians of the six­
teenth, seventeenth, and early eighteenth centuries do not utter warnings
against it, and the fact that it is not found in the English of Ireland or
America also suggests that it gained currency rather late. Smollett, in
Roderick Random, ch. xvi, makes Mr. Jackson's fiancée—'a charming
creature—introduce $h$- in her letters in hopjack ' object', heys 'eyes', harrows 'arrows', harms 'arms', which shows that
when this book was written in 1771 the practice was a recognized and
common vulgarism.

E. Voicing of Voiceless Consonants.

Voicing of Initial $wh$-, i.e. $[w < w]$. Popularly called 'leaving out
the $h$'.

At the present time in the Received Standard as spoken in the South
and Midlands, and in the Regional dialects of these areas, no distinction
is made between whine and wine, between which and witch, white and
Wight, &c. The only exceptions are those speakers who have been sub­
jected to Scotch or Irish influence, or who have deliberately chosen to
depart from the normal practice for their own private satisfaction.

In the South and West we find $w$-spellings, instead of $wh$- or $hw$, from
an early period in M.E. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, $which$, $white$, &c., are the usual spellings in the London documents, though in
1494 we find $wich$, 388, $wen$, 391, $werof$, 388, in Cr. Knt of Bath. We
may, I think, dismiss the form $wich$ as having probably arisen in positions
of weak stress as a Relative Pronoun, but the others seem to illustrate the
voicing. The form $wich$ is very common in letters, wills, and other
private and public documents in this and the following century, and it is
suspicious because it is so often the only spelling of its kind. For instance,
Marg. Paston writes $wich(e)$, but otherwise $wh$-, and even $qu$-, a spelling
which must have penetrated from the N.E. Midlands or lower Northern
area, where it is usual, and was probably intended to express a particularly
strong form of the voiceless consonant. Wete 'wheat' occurs in Will of
J. Buckland, Northants, 1450, L. D. D. 42. 13. The Celys, in Essex,
might have been expected to pronounce 'wite', &c., but such spellings
seem not to occur in their letters, though $wh$- for original $w$- is frequent,
and is indeed one of the features of these documents. The evidence is
slight so far as the fifteenth century is concerned.

In the next century Machyn has $wyped 'whipped$', 8, $warff 'wharf$', 13,
and the inverted spelling $whent$ is common. In Cavendish, L. of Wolscy,
I have noted *wyght* 'white', 148, *wye* 'why', 157, and the inverted *whear* for *wear*, 154. In the Verney Papers I have noted only *wich* (1629) without *h*; in the Verney Memoirs, which begin in the forties of the seventeenth century, we have *anwyare*, Mary Gardiner, ii. 334, 1644, and *wig* 'whig', Edm. V., iv. 267, 1683. It is remarkable, if the habit of voicing was well established, that such independent spellers as the Verney family should not have recorded it oftener. It should be said that all the seventeenth-century writers on pronunciation assert that *'h'* is pronounced in *wh-*, a French writer (Alphabet Anglois, 1625) giving *houilch* as the pronunciation of *which*. Wallis, 1653, Howel, 1662, and Cooper, 1685, to mention no more, all declare, in various ways, that *wh* is pronounced *hw*, &c. Lady Wentworth in 1709, W. Papers 99, writes *wig* 'whig'. Elphinston, in his various writings from 1765-87, admits, while he deplores, the complete disappearance of *'h'* in *whale, what*, &c. Dr. Johnson in 1765 still believes that he 'hears the *h*'. Walker notes with regret the London use of *w-* for *wh-*. It would appear from the above that the voicing of *wh-* was not unknown in the fifteenth century, and that this became more and more widespread, though for a long time not universal in London and the surrounding counties. There were perhaps always, as now, a certain number of speakers who prided themselves on 'pronouncing the *h*'. Milton in his autograph MS. writes *weele*, Lye. 31, *wispers*, Lye. 130, and *wistle*, Com. 346. In the last word he has corrected to *wh-*.

Voicing of Voiceless Consonants; Medially: between Vowels; between a Vowel and a Consonant; Finally.

Some of the examples of voicing between vowels persist to the present day among some speakers. The forms are arranged chronologically without sub-classification.

Debity, Mrs. Isham, iv. 33, 1662; temperall, Mrs. Basire, 141 (1655), comford, 134 (1655). Cooper, 1685, says that s in casement = s; Jones, 1701, says 'b and p being like in sound, and b the easier and sweeter p does sometimes take the sound of b, as in—Baptism, capable, culpable, passport (= 'pass-board')! Cupid, Deputy, Gospel, Jasper, Jupiter, napkin'. Jones also notes 'Cubbard, newew, Steven, and proveye' = prophecy.

Lady Wentworth writes prodistant 'protestant', W. Papers 50, 1705; Peter W., censure, 100, 1710, and Lady Strafford, prodistation, 208, 1712. In the comic letter of Mr. Jackson's fiancée in Roderick Random, ch. xvi, the lady writes Cubit for 'Cupid'. Elphinston mentions the pronunciations proddestant, padrole, pardner as London vulgarisms. Mr. Bernard Shaw, in John Bull's Other Island, makes one of his Irish characters say 'prodestant', but I doubt whether the d in this word is confined to Irish speakers of English. I hasten to add that Mr. Shaw does not assert that it is.

F. Unvoicing of Consonants.

A certain number of instances of unvoicing occur scattered through the texts I have examined. Some of these appear to be of the nature of dissimilative changes, to use an unsatisfactory term, due perhaps to an unconscious attempt at distinctness; others may be due to some obscure analogy, while others are altogether inexplicable, unless they may be set down as Regional peculiarities. Some of these changes might appear hardly worth recording, but in some cases the same voiceless form appears in widely separate sources, and is therefore probably genuine; other isolated examples are recorded in the hope that future investigations may reveal more of them and throw light on their origin.

Unvoicing of Initial Consonant (at beginning of word, and at beginning of stressed syllable).

Fochsave 'vouchsafe', Gregory 110; felwette 'velvet', ibid. 208; file 'vile', Lady Sussex, Verney Mem. ii. 107; disadfantige, ibid. 108; full of family, ibid. 85, 1642; Fox hall 'Vauxhall', J. Verney, Verney Mem. iv. 357, 1685.

Unvoicing of Final Consonant.

St. Editha:—y clephyt, 44 (two syllables), clepyt, 43 (two syllables), encreset, 190, scarmysshute (Pret.), 282; aspyet 'espied' P. P., 554; twelffe 'twelve', 624; ayschetle 'asked', 872; hulte (Pret.) 'held', 1277, &c.; byche 'to buy' = bigge, 1305, 1397; y-tolte (Pret.) 'told', 1830; feynite 'fiend', 2145; blynte 'blind' Adj., 2731; Gregory, Wardroper, 196; Letters and Papers, ii. 72, Keper of the gret Warderop, 1485; incurrich, Alleyne Pprs. 16, 1591; Mrs. Elmes, Verney Mem., twenty thousand etc., ii. 82, 1641; Lady Strafford, Wardrope, W. Papers, 314, 319, 1713; Peter Wentworth, beckentl 'beckoned', W. Papers, 431, 1714; senling, 202, 1711.

Medial Unvoicing.

Ambassiter, Cavendish, L. of Wolsey, p. 7, probably owes t to the influence of the preceding s; optayne, 'obtain', Fortescue 144, Ascham, Tox. 103, is a combinative change before -t; puptishe, Letters and Papers, ii. 388, may be due to the analogy of puple, a common spelling of people; nefew, Doll Leake, Verney Mem. iv. 291, 1655, is probably a spelling-pronunciation in origin, here popularly expressed; it may still be heard.
CHAPTER IX
NOTES ON INFLEXIONS

I

Nouns.

Possessive Case of Nouns.

In fourteenth-century London English the ordinary suffix, as written by the professional scribes, is -es. In Feminines this suffix is sometimes omitted, cf. Chaucer's In hope to stonden in his Ladye grace, &c.

During the fifteenth century the suffix -es tends to be written more and more as -ys, -is, both in private letters and official and literary documents. This is observable not only in Eastern texts but also in London documents. See on this point, p. 269, above. More or less rustic productions of the West, such as St. Editha, often write -us. The -ys-forms, however, while characteristic of Eastern texts from an early date in M.E., are very common everywhere in the fifteenth century.

Since the vowel is often omitted, even in M.E., it appears that the suffix ceased normally to be pronounced as a separate syllable—except, as now, after -s, -ch, &c.—in Colloquial English by the beginning of the fifteenth century. On the other hand there were circumstances which tended to restore a syllabic pronunciation of the suffix, as -is = [iːz], well on into, perhaps to the end of, the century, and in poetry an occasional syllabic pronunciation is revealed by the rhyme and metre for two hundred years longer.

The main points to be considered here are the confusion of the old Possessive suffix with the Possessive Pronoun ys, the weak or unstressed form of his, his; the omission of the suffix -ys, -s, &c., in any form; the various constructions in the inflexion of groups of words—e.g. the King of England's son, &c.

Confusion of Possessive Suffix with the Possessive Pronoun Masculine.

From the moment that on the one hand the Pronoun his had lost the aspirate in unstressed positions, and on the other the Possess. suffix had become -is, -ys, there could be no distinction in pronunciation between a Noun inflected with the latter suffix and the same Noun followed by the weakened form of his. Thus confusion arose, and is revealed by the detachment of the suffix -ys from the Noun to which it belongs, and then by the spelling of this latter hys or his. The kyng hys sonne, &c., was felt as a definite construction and therefore so written. While this came to exactly the same as the kyngys sonne, the two constructions were
HIS INSTEAD OF POSSESSIVE SUFFIX

doubtless recognized as distinct by the more careful speakers and writers.

On the other hand the less critical scribes were often doubtful whether to write the suffix -ys joined on to the Noun or whether to detach it, and in this case whether to write ys as they and every one else pronounced, or hys to show that they knew what it meant. The result of the new construction was that what was meant as a genuine inflected Possessive, e.g. kyngys, &c., retained the vowel in pronunciation long after this had normally disappeared in such words. Thus as late as Shakespeare's L. L. Lost, we find, 'To shew his teeth as white as Whaler bone', Act iv. It is probable that this occurred also in colloquial speech, helped also by the analogy of Possessives like jamys. But after all, the construction with his, and the Noun with the old inflexion, were absolutely indistinguishable in pronunciation, and most speakers, possibly well into the seventeenth century, would have been hard put to it to say exactly which they intended.

We find traces of the construction with his as early as Genesis and Exodus (c. 1250), where the suffix is already separated, though joined to the Noun by a hyphen—adame-is sune, 493, dat dune-is siden 'the sides of the hill', 1295. This text is noteworthy for constantly writing the weak forms of the Pers. Prons. without h-.

Again, in the fourteenth century this construction is found, e.g. in Trevisa (c. 1387), to play with a chylde hys brouch. From the early fifteenth century onwards the construction is common, and it will be remarked that ys is used indifferently after Masculine and Feminine Nouns:—

St. Editha:—Wortynger is tyme, 51, seynyt Dunstone his lore, 761; Shillingford:—seynyt Luke is dey, 5, Calston is payre, 5, my lord of Excetire is tenants, 14; Marg. Paston:—Harlesdon ys name, ii. 191, the knyt hys sonne, ii. 240, my moder ys sake, ii. 364; Gregory's Chron.:—Seyn Edmonde ys Bury, 91, the queene ys modyr, 232, no schoo apon no man ys fote, 238, my Lorde of Warrwycke ys brother, 230; Register of Oseney, oure lorde he pope is commaundments, 61; Cely Papers:—Margaret ys daughter, 117; Earl of Desmond (Ltr. to Henry VII, c. 1489–93), tharle of Ormond is deppule (Ltrrs. and Pprs., i, p. 382; Thos. Lord Dacre, 1521:—her Grace is requeste, Ellis ii. i. 282; Archbp. Cranmer, 1536:—the Busshoppe of Rome his power, Ellis ii. 3. 27, the Busshoppe of Rome his lawes, Ellis iii. 3. 25; Machyn:—one ys ere 'one his ear', 64, the penter ys nam, 105, the Bishop of London and Coventre ys wiff, 229; Ascham, Toxophilus:—on a man his tiptoes, 47, the Kinge his wisdome, 38, an other his heeles, 47, the-Kinge his foole, 50; Euphues:—Philantus his faith, 57, Fidus his love, 277. Such phrases as for Jesus Christ his sake are familiar in the Prayer Book. Sir Thos. Smith, Republ. Angl., 1583, has the daulphin of Fravme his power, 19. A few examples from the seventeenth century must suffice to illustrate the survival of this construction. Dr. Denton has Dr. Read his treatise on wounds, Verney Pprs., 1639; Edmund Verney, Verney Mem. ii, p. 130, has my lord Parsons his sonne, 1641, and Sir Ralph V. has St. James his House, Verney Mem. iii. 236, 1655. In these cases his may be written as the most satisfactory way of inflecting words ending in -s and to avoid Parsonsés, Jameses. Lady Wentworth has the Princ his
NOTES ON INFLEXIONS

but makes no difficulty about writing *St. Janissis*, 47. Lady Plyant in Congreve's *Double Dealer*, 1693, says, 'I am in such a twitter to read Mr. Careless his letter', Act iv, Sc. iii.

When this construction was well established and recognized as containing the Pron. *his*, the process was extended to the Fem. and the Pl. We get *juno hir bedde*, Euphues, 86; *Mrs. Francis her mariage*, Lady Verney, Verney Mem. ii. 378, 1647; and *you should translate Canterbury and Chillingworth their books into French*, Dr. Denton, Verney Mem. ii. 222, 1645.

The Omission of the Possessive Suffix in Nouns.

In M.E. the suffix *-es, -ys, &c.*, is used commonly to inflect Nouns of all genders, but is sometimes omitted. This occurs most frequently in the M.E. period—(a) after names ending in *-s*, such as *Moses*; (b) in old Feminines like *ladye*, where the *-e* is a survival of a Fem. Genitive suffix; (c) as a survival of old Weak Nouns whose Gen. ended in *-an, M.E. -en*, but which have lost the *-n* of the ending; (d) occasionally in old Nouns ending in *-r, brother, fader, &c.*, which originally had no *-es* suffix.

All these cases of flexionless Possessives occur in the Modern period, and there are certain additional categories which arise, viz. there is an extension of class (a) to words like *hors(e)*, and there are other instances of omission which cannot be brought under any of the above classes.

We may summarize the classes of flexionless Possessives as follows:

- The suffix is often omitted—(a) in words ending in *-s*, where we now preserve it as a full syllable [iz]; (b) before a word beginning with *s*—(c) in old Feminines, of which we have now only a few survivals in stereotyped phrases—*Lady Chapel, &c.*; (d) in groups, when we should inflect the last word of the group—the duke of Somerset dowther (which see below); (e) in old *-r* words—*father, brother, &c.*; (f) in other words where no special reason can be assigned.

It must be understood that in nearly all the above classes the inflected forms are more frequent, but the examples of omissions are sufficiently numerous to deserve recording. Some of the examples might be classified under more than one head.

(a) *Omission of Possessive Suffix in Words ending in -a.*

Siege of Rouen (c. 1420), *hors quarter, horse hedde*, 18; Marg. Paston, *my lord of Clarance man*, ii. 372 (this might fall under (d)); Machyn, *sant famesparke*, 166; Ascham, *horsefeete*, Tox. 157, for conscience sake, Scholem. 68; Webbe, 1586, *Achilles Tombe*, 24, a *horse necke*, 85; Lord Burghley, 1586, *ther Mastriss crymes*, Bardon Pprs. 43.

[Note. After [dz], where we either pronounce [iz], or omit the suffix altogether, as in *bridge head, College gate*, Pecok writes -is—*collegis gate.*]

(b) *Omission of Suffix before Words beginning with B-.*

St. Editha, *his soule sake*, 382, for *synne sake*, 813; *my housbond soule*, Will of J. Buckland, Northants, 1450, L. D. D. 43. 9; *my wyff soule*, Will of Sir T. Cumberworth, L. D. D. 53. 28, 1451; Ascham, *Robin Hoode servant*, Tox. 44, for *earnest matter sake*, Tox. 44, for *his country sake*, Tox. 94, for *his pleasure sake*, ibid. 94, for *maner sake*, Sch. 68; Lady
Omission of Possessive Suffix

Mary Gray (daughter of Duke of Suffolk), for god sake, Ellis ii. 2, 310, 1566; David Rogers to Burghley, the younge kinge stomacke, Ellis ii. 3, 147, 1588; Will of Ralph Wooton, Bucks., 1533, my ffather and mother soules, Linc. Dioc. Docs. 159. 20; Machyn, the quen oyster, 63, a hossear sune, 121, master Godderyke sune, 258, in ys ffather stede, 258 (pernaps under (e)); Sir R. L'Estrange, for Brevity sake, A Whipp, a Whipp, 1662.

(c) Omission of Suffix at the end of Old Feminine Nouns.

St. Editha, seynt Wultrude soule, 3068; Bp. Pecok, modir tunge, i. 159; Shillingford, our lady belle, 94; Gregory, Mary Maudelyn Lyyn, 103; Lord Berners, our lady day, i. 105, Mary Maudlyn day, i. 70; Sir J. Paston, Ewhelemy Lady Suffolk Place in Oxenforthe schyre, iii. 33; Bp. Latimer, My Ladye Elizabethe grace, 117; Machyn, the quyn grace, 167, my Lade Elisabeth grace, 167, Lade Mare grace, 30 (three times), &c.; Lord Burghley, 1586, the Scottish Quene letter, Bardon Pprs. 46; D. Rogers to Burghley, the Scottis Quene cryme, ibid., p. 47. Machyn's construction my lade grasys, &c., 37, is normal in omitting the suffix of the first Noun, but as the second Noun is inflected the first might in any case tend to be uninfluenced in this sentence. Cavendish, L. of Wolsey, our Lady mattens; Edmund Verney, our Lady Day last, Verney Mem. iv. 404, 1688 = 'Our Lady's Day'. (It may be mentioned that in E. Midland Fem. Nouns took the -s suffix in the Possess. very early; cf. bes cwnes canceler 'this queen's'), Laud Chron. 1123, written about 1154.)

(d) Omission of Suffix in Group Construction.

Marg. Paston, my lorde of Clarance man (should possibly come under (a) as already indicated); Machyn, bishop of London palles, 204, the duke of Somerset dowther, 253; Sir R. Verney, my Lord of Essex Army, Verney Mem. ii. 122, 1641.

(e) Omission of Suffix in old Words ending in -r.

St. Editha:—his fader wyffe, 238, fader guile, 2491; Marg. Paston:—hyr broder advice, ii. 26. The construction, cited under (b), above, may also be explained under the present heading—my ffather and mother soules, 1533; Machyn:—hys brodur horse, 22, in ys ffather stede, 258, already cited under (b) may equally well belong to the present category; the same may be said of Lord Berners' by the father syde, i. 181; 'the father good will', John Alleyn, Alleyn Pprs. 15, 159—.

(f) Omission of Suffix in other cases.

St. Editha:—heuene kynge, 395, may perhaps be due to the analogy of an old Weak N.—O.E. heofon itself is occasionally weak in L.O.E., and this may well be due to the analogy of eorbe; Will of J. Buckland, 1450, Northants, Richard Clavell wyff, L. D. D. 44. 7; Will of R. Astbroke, Bucks, 1534, the sayde Willym Astbroke children, L. D. D. 169. 2; Lord Hastings, c. 1470, my brother Roaf assent and agrement, Paston Ltrs. iii. 108; Cr. of Duke of York—Henry Wynslow horse, 399, 1494; Machyn—the kynge grace, 77, my lord cardenall commyng, 77, the bucher wyff, 8, a shreiff wyff, 22, a prest wyff, 32. Thos. Lord Sackville:—the Cardinall use, Letter, Appendix to Wks., p. xxxiii. Thos. Lever's Sermons:—the harte bloud, 125; this may be a survival of the old Weak Gen. herten—herte, it is

1 This construction is common in Middle English.
also an old Fem.; Cavendish also has *my hartblode*, 251. Lady Wentworth writes *my sister Bathurst offer*, 43, and Peter Wentworth, *a parson widdoe*, 85. Lady B. Harley, 2 (1625), his grandfather loue.

**The Inflexion of Groups.**

Such constructions as the *King of England's power*, the *Bishop of Worcester's palace*, and so on, are thoroughly established in the best colloquial and literary usage, and in the former there is practically no limit to the length of the group which the genius of the language permits to be inflected as a whole, by the addition of the suffix to the last element. While the evidence shows that this construction was used in the fifteenth century, there appears to have been, for a long time, a feeling that it was inelegant, and various devices are employed to avoid it. The usual M.E. type of construction is well represented by the title of the well-known song—*The Bailiff's daughter of Islington*, and this form survives here and there; for instance, Gregory writes *the dukys daughter of Northefolke*, 140; Lord Berners:—*the kynges daughter of Englande*, i. 319; even when two nouns are in apposition, as in *Lord Neville's wife*, the inflexion of the second in this order is sometimes avoided; thus Gregory writes *the Lordys wyffe Neyle*, 140, and Machyn—*Master Godderyke sure the goldsmith*, 258, instead of —*Godderyke the goldsmiths sure*. A curious construction occurs in a letter of Henry V, 1418—*a man of the Ducs of Orliance*, Ellis i. 1. 1.

Another slight modification is to write *-is* or *his* instead of the ordinary Possess. suffix—e. g. *my lord of Excetres is tenantis*, Shillingford, 44 (cf. p. 315, above). In Cavendish, Life of Wolsey, *the abbots of Westminister*, 199, is used absolutely. Lastly, the suffix is sometimes omitted altogether, although the word-order is the same as though it were present. This has already been illustrated under (d) above. The following early examples of group inflexion are confined to cases where the suffix occurs joined to the last word of the group which it inflects.

St. Editha—*be erle of Wyltones wyf*, 139; Cr. of Duke of York—*Sett in like maner as therle of Suffolkis*, 396; Recep. of Cath. of Ar.—*the Archebishopspe of Canteburyys barge, the Abbot of Westymynsters barge*, 405; St. of Irel. (St. Pprs. Hen. VIII, iii)—*the Erle of Kyldares sunnes*, p. 24, 1515; Bulmer (Litr.)—*my Lorde of Richemoundes Affairs, my Lorde of Richmounds landes*, Ellis iii. 2. 122, 124, 1527; Latimer—*Ladye Maryes grace*, Serm. 117, *our holye father of Romes eares*, 107; Machyn—*my lord of Canterberes plasse*, 49; Q. Elizabeth (Letter, 1553)—*my Lorde of Bedfords mynde*, Ellis ii. 2. 211; Lord Berners—the *Kynge of Englanedes homage*, i. 78, *the Lorde of Mannes quarrell*, i. 254, Sir Gaullier of Mannes fader, i. 254 *the Kyng of Englanedes daughter*, i. 319; Cavendish, L. of Wolsey—*Kynge Herre the VIIIths sister*, 72, ayenst the kyng and my lords commyng, 81, *my Lord of Shrewsburies servaunts*, 215; Sir Thos. Smith, Republ. Angl.—*King Richarde the secondes time*, 141, *King Henrie the eights time*, 104, *King Henrie the thirds time*, 123; in T. S.'s Letters—the *duke de Montpenciers son*, Ellis ii. 3. 13. A hundred years later we find in Aubrey's Lives—'He (Bp. Wilkins) was one of Seth Lord Bishop of Sarum's most intimate friends', ii. 301.
**Strong Plurals: in -es, -s, &c.**

The great majority of nouns in English take an -s suffix in the Plural. The old so-called strong suffix is generally written -es by good scribes in London documents of Chaucer’s day. Throughout the fifteenth century, however, the form -ys or -is, originally apparently chiefly characteristic of Eastern texts, becomes more and more common, not only in documents of all kinds written in the Eastern counties, but also in those from more westerly areas. Before the end of this century -ys is frequently written in London official and other documents. At the present time the vowel of the suffix is lost except after words ending in -s, -sh, -dge, and in these cases the Plural ending in Received Standard is [ˈɪz], so that although we write fishes, asses, causes, bridges, we pronounce [fɪz, əsɪz, kəzɪz, brɪdʒɪz]. There can be no doubt that this pronunciation of this suffix is the direct descendant of the forms written -ys, &c., in the fifteenth century, and it is, to my mind, quite certain that not only in Received Standard but in many Regional dialects this pronunciation has obtained for not much less than 500 years. Some years ago the question was raised whether this present-day pronunciation, and the fact that Caxton often writes -ys in the Plural, were not proofs that Literary English and Standard Spoken English were both influenced by what was called the ‘Oxford type’ of English, that is, by a more westerly type, as opposed to the usual East Midland character which, on the whole, dominates the Literary and the Spoken language. Here was indeed a very pretty mare’s nest, which apparently arose chiefly because it was noticed that Bishop Pecok, in his Repressor (1449) and other works, makes copious use of the -ys form. Where the bishop got his suffix is another story, but it is quite certain that it is more characteristic of the East than of the West. In the latter area a very common form of the ending is -us, but even so definitely Regional a dialect as that of St. Editha (Wilts.), written about thirty years before the Repressor, often uses -ys, which form was rapidly becoming common both East and West. It is rather doubtful how far we can take the spelling -ys, -es, &c., seriously in the fifteenth century as representing a syllable, except after words ending in the consonants above mentioned. We may be certain, however, that it was at least pronounced as a syllable in those cases where we now so pronounce it, and if we find causis written, it is reasonable to suppose that a pronunciation identical with our own, so far as the suffix is concerned, is intended. It is probable that -ys was pronounced as a syllable in poetry long after it was lost in colloquial speech, as we still pronounce Prets. and P. P.’s in -ed [ɪd]. Cf. Hoccleve’s rhyme—werkys—derk is, Reg. of Pr. 277, 278; and Spenser’s ‘Then her embracing twixt her armes twaine’, F. Q. Bk. VI. xii. 19. In the London area -es was the traditional spelling, and when the scribes depart from this it must mean something. If a scribe often, or even usually, writes -es, but occasionally -ys, we are, I think, justified in believing that in the former case he is merely following tradition, but that in the latter he is recording the usual pronunciation. In the sixteenth century it is certain that the vowel of the suffix was only pronounced where we now pronounce it, and while -es had, strangely enough, become the orthodox printers’ spelling, more
and more adhered to by educated writers, there are enough divergencies from the convention, and just in those words where the vowel of the suffix was pronounced, to show what the pronunciation was in such cases. It is immaterial that most writers use the spelling -es; that was natural, and tells us nothing as to the pronunciation. What is significant is that so many also write -ys.

In the fifteenth century, among Western writers who have forms in -ys are St. Editha, Bishop Pecok, Shillingford, and we may, if we please, include Fortescue, although his dialect has very few Regional characteristics. Among the specifically Eastern writers we have Palladius, the Bury Wills, the Pastons, the Celys, and the Suffolk Londoner, Gregory. This list pretty well disposes of the 'Oxford' myth. Coming to less markedly provincial documents, all the more or less official records in Letters and Papers, vol. i, occasionally write -ys; so do the Book of Quintessence, Capgrave, Caxton, and the Rewle of Sustr. Men. Caxton's expensis, and the Rewle's versis, messis, are significant.

Passing to the sixteenth century, a very large number of books and private letters, &c., write -ys. I mention a few of these sources, quoting only forms in which the vowel of the suffix was unquestionably pronounced, although many other instances of the spelling occur. In printed books the form -es becomes more and more fixed as the century goes on; the occasional departures, both here and in private documents, are therefore the more noteworthy.

The form -ys occurs in all the following:—Elyot's Gouernour—horsis, placis, versis, sickenessis; Pace, Letter in Ellis ii. r. 1513—hostagis, causis; Lord Berners—chargis; Cranmer (Letters)—bargis; Cavendish, Life of Wolsey—horsis, crossis; Q. Elizabeth—practis, scusis; Machyn—horsis, branchys, torchys; Gabr. Harvey's Lttrs.—causis, coursis.

The various writers in Verney Papers and Verney Mem. sometimes write -is—e.g. Mrs. Pulteney, richis, 1639. Lady Wentworth writes glassis, horsis, oringis, &c. (On this suffix see also pp. 269–70.)

For the extension of the -es Pl. suffix to words of other types cf. p. 322.

Weak Plurals: in -en.

This class of Pls., once very large, has shrunk in present-day English almost to the vanishing point, the only survivor being oxen. Brethren and children fall under the Irregulars, which see pp. 323–4, below.

In M.E. a considerable extension of the -en suffix took place, notably in the dialects of the South and South-East, but to some extent also in the Midlands. See a brief account of the M.E. conditions in my Short Hist. of English, §112. A fairly large number of Weak Pls. still survive in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and they are not confined to provincial writers, though these have the larger share of them. The following list shows the principal Plurals of this type, with references to the writers, or works in which they are found. At the present time, primosen, housen may be heard in provincial dialects, and I have even heard foxen from an old woman in a Berkshire village.

Honden, Hondon 'hands', St. Editha.
SURVIVAL OF WEAK PLURALS

This class is represented in present-day English by *sheep*, *deer*, and these words belonged in O.E. to a large class of Neuters, which, being long monosyllables, had no suffix in the Nom. and Acc. Pl. Many of these words preserved this characteristic in M.E., some practically universally, some occasionally, in certain dialects, but more were swept into the large class of Pls. in -es. With this type, however, were commonly associated, in Middle and Modern English, words expressing number, weight, measure, time, and mass, also certain names of animals. Of the words thus uninflected in the Pl. some were original uninflected Neuters, while others belonged to other classes. *Sheep*, *deer*, and *swine* may be omitted from the list, as these forms are universal and still survive. We may, however, note in passing that Machyn has several remarkable Pls. in -s, including *velles* 'veals', 11, *swines*, 11, and one or two others recorded elsewhere (p. 322).
NOTES ON INFLEXIONS

Year. Fortescue—vii yere; Shillingford, 68, 69; Caxton—syxe score yere, Jason, 52, 36; Sir Thos. Smith—xxij yere old, Rep. 120; Edm. Verney—2 yere, V. Mem. ii. 134, 1641.

Winter. Wilson—thirtie winter, 186.

Foot. Pallad.—seven fote; Shillingford—ix fote long, 85; Gregory; Cavendish, L. of Wolsey—xn foote thyke, 8.

Finger. Pallad.—sex fyngre thicke.


Mile. Lord Berners—xxiii Englisshe myle, i. 491.

Mark. Fortescue—an e. marke.

Pound. Wilson—three thousand pound; Latimer—L pounde; Lady Wentworth—three hundred thousand pound.

Shilling. Lady Wentworth—ten shilling a pound, fifty shilling a chaldren, 62.

Sturgeon. Machyn, 11.


Horse. Shillingford, 5, Cr. Duke of York; Lord Berners—a thousand horse (= soldiers here), i. 77; Cavendish, L. of Wolsey—vi of the beste horse, 285.

Apple. Euphues—to bring forth apple, 113. No doubt used collectively.

Thing. Gregory—alle thinge; Lord Berners—to love god of whome we have all thinge, ii. 190.

Thank. Q. Elizabeth—the two gentilmen I trust shal receave your thanke, Lttrs. to J. VI, 65.

Lady Wentworth has this twoe last poste, and ten wax candle. The former word perhaps owes its uninflected form to the consonantal combination—possibly Lady W. even pronounced it without the final -t (cf. p. 303)—the latter may be used collectively, referring to a bundle or group of candles.

A curious instance of an uninflected Pl. after the word pair is a payre of coberd 'cupboards', in the Will of R. Bradley, Leicestershire, 1533, L. D. D. 161. 75.

Exceptional Plurals in -s.

I have noted the following exceptional use of the -s suffix:—hosys (instead of hosen, hosyn), Will of Sir Thos. Cumberworth, Lincs., 1451, L. D. D. 51. 23; fotes 'feet', Palladius, 8. 200; Machyn—mottuns 'sheep' (cf. also Pope—)velles 'calves', 11, swines, 11, samons, 11, ees 'eyes', 204. This form is usually weak. Sir Edm. Verney, in 1639, actually writes in spight of our ieeihs, Verney Pprs. 244.

The word riches, now taken as a Pl. (having no Sing.), is in reality the French richesse. Bp. Pecok inflects it regularly in the Pl.—ricchessis, i. 296, 297.

The Change of f to v before the Suffix of the Possessive and of the Plural.

At the present time we do not make this change in the Possess. Sing., except in the phrases calvé's head, calvé's foot, but say calf's, wife's, wolf's,
&c. On the other hand, we pronounce the voiced ending, and express it in the spelling, in the Plurals, *loaves, wives, wolves, calves*, &c., and usage varies in *roofs*, while in the Pl. of *hoof, hooves* is felt as archaic and more suited to poetry (cf. Lady of Shalott) than to colloquial speech. There is no historical reason for the distinction between the Possess. Sing. and the Plural. In O.E. voiceless open consonants (*s, f, b*) were voiced between vowels, so that normally all inflected cases, Sing. and Pl., of the above words would have -*v*-, which in the Possess. Sing. and in the Pl. would produce the forms [wulfz, kavz, waivz], &c., when the vowel of the suffix disappeared, and left -*v*- in contiguity. Our usage now has generalized the *f* for the whole Singular and *v* for the Plural, apart from those words where the Singular type has been extended to the Plural as well.

This is convenient and provides descriptive grammarians with their rule that 'words ending in *f* form their Plural in -*ves*'. The habit was by no means fixed, however, in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and the examples show that some speakers generalized *f* everywhere, both Sing. and Pl., while others adhered to the ancient practice of voicing the *f* in the Possess. Sing. and in the Plural alike. A few examples will suffice to show how unsettled was the usage.

**Plurals in -f(e)s.**


On the other hand, the voiced type is the more usual, and Shillingford includes under it the French word *strife*, of which he has a Pl. form *stryves*, 98.

**Possessive Singular in -v(e)s.**

Marg. Paston, *wyvis*, ii. 365; Wilson, *wiues*, 56, 206; Q. Elizabeth, *your liues peril* (Sing.), Lttrs. to James VI, 71; Euphues, *wolves, 322*; Shakespeare (First Fol.), *wiues*, Merry Wives, iv. 5. The form of *lyue* in Lord Lovel's Will, 1455, L. D. D. 8. 4, 14, may be considered either as the survival of an inflected form (after *of*), or at least as based on the analogy of the inflected forms.

**Irregular Plurals.**

Under this head we include *children, brethren*, and several other Pls. of the same kind which are still found in Early Modern.

*Children* is remarkable for having both the Pl. -*r*- suffix—O.E. *tildru*, M.E. *childre*—and the weak Pl. suffix -*en*. *Brethren* has a mutated vowel in the base and the weak Pl. suffix. Several other words, mostly old Neuters, show in M.E. a Pl. suffix -*ren*, that is a combination of the old -*ru* suffix, with the addition of -*en*. Such are O.E. *lamb—lambru*, M.E. *lambre, lambren*; O.E. *calf—calfru*, M.E. *calfre, calfren*; O.E. *egg* 'egg', Pl. *ægru*, M.E. *eire, éiren*.

The group of words expressing family relationships, O.E. *fæder, módor, bróbor, s(w)ustor, doholr*, all favour Pl. forms in -*en* in the South in M.E. The weak *sustren* survives, as we shall see, well into the sixteenth century.
A few examples are given to illustrate the variety of usage with regard to some of these Pls. in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

M.E. *eyren*, &c., 'eggs'; Palladius, *eyron*; Rewle Sustr. Men., *eyrin*, 86. 31; Bk. of Quint., *eyrin*, 4; Caxton, in the well-known Preface to the Aeneid, uses *eyren* to illustrate that this archaic form was still in use, but the London innkeeper in the story did not understand what was wanted until *eggys* were asked for. Gregory has *eggys*.


*Children*. *Childeren*, childeryn, St. Editha, Pecok, Fortescue, &c.; Machyn, Euphues, *chylderne*, *childerne*; Elyot's Will, *childre*, which is a survival of the O.E. and M.E. forms; Coverdale has a Gen. Pl. *childers*, and Edw. VI First P. B. has *childers children* in the Marriage Service. The spelling *childre* doubtless stands for [tʃildr].

The rather rare Pl. *deytron* 'daughters' occurs in St. Editha. This shows mutation of the vowel (M.E. *dehter*), and the Wk. *-en*.

II

ADJECTIVES.

The inflexion of Adjectives, as regards case, has disappeared by the beginning of the fifteenth century, or, if it survives in poetry here and there for the sake of the metre, it must be regarded as archaic.

A belated Genitive Pl. occurs in the phrase *God our aller Creatour* from a letter of Richard III to James III of Scotland, Lttrs. and Pprs. i, p. 53, where *aller* represents M.E. *allre*, sometimes written *aldre*, O.E. *alra*.

French Plurals.

The addition of *-s* to the Pl. of Adjectives, on the French model, which is rare in M.E., though there are a few instances in Chaucer (cf. *Short Hist. of Eng.*, § 319). In the fifteenth century I have found a not considerable number of these Plurals, chiefly in legal and official documents. Some of the following are certainly more or less technical (legal) phrases, and are presumably taken straight from French legal documents. Others, again, are not to be explained in this way. Apparently the usage was extended from the legal clichés by certain writers, with a view to special elegance and correctness. It will be observed that the inflected Adj. usually follows the Noun, as in French, though this is not always the case. We may, I think, regard these *-s* Plurals as the result of a literary whim. They can hardly have had a real existence in uttered speech. The cases I have noted are:

The Forms of the Comparative and Superlative.

This is the main centre of interest, so far as Adjectives are concerned, in the Modern Period. The chief points to be considered are: (1) comparatives with vowel shortened by a M.E. process before the suffix -re, when the Positive ends in a consonant; this shortened vowel is sometimes extended by analogy to the Superlative, where it could not normally develop, and even to the Positive; (2) the survival of Comp. and Superl. forms with mutated vowel; (3) the pleonastic use of more and most before Adj. already inflected respectively with the Comp. or Superl. suffixes; (4) certain irregularities consisting either in the use of an entirely new form, cf. badder under 4, below, or in the addition of the Comparative or Superlative suffixes to words which we should not now thus inflect, preferring rather to prefix more, most.

Survival of Comparatives with Shortened Vowels.

Gretter 'greater', Palladius, Shillingford, 11; Fortescue, 122; Gregory, 277; Caxton, Jason 16. 33. The Superl. form grettist (-est) is found in Fortescue, 119, &c.; Gregory, 115; Jul. Berners and Machyn. The Positive grett(e) occurs in Fortescue, 121; Gregory, 83; Machyn, passim.

Depper 'deeper', Palladius, 52. 239; sonner 'sooner', Pall. 83. 115; swelter 'sweeter', Pall. 84. 644; sweetist, in Pecok, i. 67.

Uttrist, Pecok; Caxton, Jason 71. 11. The positive of this word is in reality a Comparative—O.E. úte, with a Comp. suffix added.

Survivals of Mutated Comparatives and Superlatives.

The only surviving members of this class at the present time are elder, eldest, which are no longer used, as formerly, as the Comp. and Superl. of old, but in a special way, applied only to the members of a family, society, or group.

1 The following additional examples of Pl. Adj: may be noted, all from Paston Letters—certeins notables and resonables causes, Will. Paston i, 30 (1430); diverses persones, Dalling’s Petition, i. 36 (1434).
Pecok has *eldir dates* 'former days', i. 107; Palladius, *elder* 'older', 28. 760; *elder* as an ordinary Comp. of *old* occurs in 1579 in 'E. K.'s Epistle Dedicatory to the Shepherds' Calendar; and a little later in Euphues, 208—'You are too young, and were you *elder* . . .'. In Congreve's *Way of the World* (1700) the phrase occurs, 'I suppose this Deed may bear an *elder* Date than what', &c., Act v, Sc. xiii.

Of the other words formerly mutated in Comparison, *long* and *strong* appear to be the only survivors in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, unless we include Gregory's *grytler*, 227 (O.E. *griðra*), but this is much more probably to be explained otherwise (p. 212).

The Comp. *strenger* is found in Pecok, i. 46; Jul. Berners (Adv., the Adjective is *stronger*); Lord Berners, i. 84. The Superl. *strengest* I have found in Caxton, Jason 70. 7 and 26. *Lenger* is found, Marg. Paston, i. 176; Susstr. Men. 93. 29; Gregory, 233; Lord Berners, i. 310 (*ar, Adv.); Latimer, 72; Lord Edw. Howard, Ellis ii. i. 215 (1513); Ascham, Tox. 64; Gabr. Harvey, Lttrs. 20. *Lengest* I have noted, Palladius, 88. 772; Pecok, i. 133; Marg. Paston, i. 250.

**Use of More and Most before Comparative and Superlative Forms.**

Every one knows Shakespeare's *most unkindest cut of all*, Jul. Caesar, Act iii, Sc. ii. The following are a few examples from works written before and up to Shakespeare's time.

Comparatives:—*more better*, Gregory, 200; Monk of Evesham (1482), *more worltheir* 47, *more surer* 56, *more gladder* 101; *more larger*, Jul. Berners; *more gretter*, Caxton, Jason 63. 30; *more stronger*, Lord Berners, i. 59, *the more fresher*, ibid. i. 295; *more diligenter*, Latimer, 53; *the more fitter*, Euphues, 87, *more swifter*, ibid. 152.

Superlatives:—*he most streytest*, Shillingford, 9; *the most best wyse*, ibid. 18; *the most gentelyst*, Gregory, 200, *most parlylystie*, ibid. 230; *most strengest*, Caxton, Jason 70. 7; *mooste byttlyrste*, Mnk. of Ev. 43; *most hardest*, Jul. Berners; *moost narrest and secretlest*, Lord Berners, i. 27, *moost outragyoust people*, ibid. i. 211, *moost ungracyoust of all.*

Dryden, in his Essay on the Dramatic Poetry of the Last Age, says:—'I think few of our present writers would have left behind them such a line as this—" Contain your spirits in more stricter bounds ". But that gross way of two comparatives was then ordinary, and, therefore, more pardonable in Jonson.'

**Various Peculiarities and Irregularities of Comparison.**

The most remarkable 'irregularity' in Comparison which I have found is perhaps *badder*, in Lyly's Euphues of all books. The passage in which it occurs is worth quoting for various reasons. It is typically Euphuistic in character, it is interesting as giving Lyly's opinion concerning a famous seat of learning, and the context seems to explain why the author took such a liberty with English grammar.

The passage occurs in the message 'To my verie good friends the Gentlemen Schollers of Oxford', at the end of the first part of Euphues.

'The Estritch that taketh the greatest pride in her feathers, picketh

1 Note 'you would have dealt *more civiller* with', &c., Nick Arris (1657), V. Mem. iii. 398.
some of the worst out, and burneth them: there is no tree but hath some blast, no countenance but hath some blemish, and shall Oxford then be blameless? I wish it were so, but I cannot think it is so. But as it is it may be better, and were it badder, it is not the worst.'

'I thinke there are fewe Universities that haue lesse faultes then Oxford, many that haue more, none but haue some', p. 208.

Lyly could not resist the alliteration and assonance of better and badder.

Pecok preserves rathir with its original force as the Comparative of rath 'early', and contrasts it with latir, i. 94. Lord Berners has the old Superl. ferrist 'farthest', the vowel of which has mutation. Elyot uses moost in the old Adjectival sense of 'greatest'—hir moost discomforle, 2. 147. Latimer uses -lye as a living Adjectival suffix—bysthoplye duties and wordes, 25, unscripterlye, 48. Far into the seventeenth century many words which we should not now inflect appear with the Comp. and Superl. suffixes. I give only a very few examples among many. Openist, Pecok, i. 77; greuouser, Latimer, 191; willinger, Ascham, Scholem. 23; delicatest, Euphues, 35; naturalest, Sir Thos. Smith, Rep. 22; pacienter, Gabr. Harvey's Ltrs. 137; ungratefull, Otway's Friendship in Love. A few more Superlative suffixes to words of this kind will be found on p. 282 to illustrate the loss of the vowel.

III

Personal Pronouns.

The Personal Pronouns in the Plural.

The Old English Personal Pronouns hie, heora, heom appear in M.E. in the South and a great part of the Midlands as hi, here, hem, &c. In the London dialect these forms are gradually ousted by the forms, of Scandinavian origin, pey, peir, peim, &c., which get into this dialect from the North through the East Midlands.

The Nom. hii is the first to go, and is not found after the time of Davie. Chaucer, his contemporaries, and followers invariably write pei, pey, thei, they, &c. Some provincial works like St Editha still preserve the archaic hee, hoe. There is nothing more to be said about the strong forms of the Nom. after the first quarter of the fourteenth century.

The weak forms will be discussed later.

The next of the h- forms to disappear is her(e), and I know no examples of it after the third quarter of the fifteenth century, except in the Nut-brown Maid, c. 1500, and in Surrey. The th- forms do not appear in the London dialect before the fifteenth century, and they seem to come in rather reluctantly and very gradually during this century, generally accompanied by the older forms. Except, however, as occasional, probably deliberate, archaisms, the old Possess, her may be said to disappear from literature by the end of the fifteenth century.

The history of hem is rather curious. It survives in constant use among nearly all writers during the fifteenth century, often alongside the th- form. I have not noted any sixteenth-century example of it in the comparatively numerous documents I have examined, until quite at the end of the century. It reappears, however, in Marston and
Chapman early in the seventeenth century, and in the form 'em occurs, though sparingly, in the Verney Mem. towards the end of the seventeenth century, where the apostrophe shows that already it was thought to be a weakened form of them. During the eighteenth century 'em becomes fairly frequent in printed books, and it is in common use to-day as [em]. It is rather difficult to explain the absence of such forms as hem or em in the sixteenth century, since the frequency at a later period seems to show that, at any rate, the weak form without the aspirate must have survived throughout. The explanation must be that em, though commonly used, was felt, as now, to be merely a form of them.

**Survivals of her, &c.**

Hoccleve, here, hir; Lydgate, her, here.

St. Editha, hure, here; Audelay, here; Bokenam, hyr, here (and ther); Constable of Dynevor Castle, her, har; Bp. Pecok, her; Sir J. Fortescue, her (occasionally, usually thair); Marg. Paston, her, passim (and ther); Rewle Sustr. Men., her, here; Bk. of Quintessence, her (and her); Ord. of Worcester, hur (and ther); Engl. Reg. of Godstow, her (and more rarely their); Engl. Reg. of Oseney, here (and there, here); Gregory, her, hir, here (and there rarely); Caxton, Jason, her (rarely, generally their); Nut-brown Maid, her, line 6.

I have noted one certain example of her 'their' in Surrey's poems, Tottel, p. 24. Other cases are very doubtful. An undoubted example of her in late colloquial use is pointed out by Mr. Orton of Merton College, in Machyn 141, -'and after to her plasse, and they, &c.'

Mr. Henry Bradley, however, in Shakespeare's England mentions the following undoubted examples of her: Hen. VI, Pt. I, i. 83; Othello, iii. 66; Troilus, i. iii. 118. The first occurs in all the Folios, the second in all Quartos and Folios, the third in F1. See perhaps also F.Q.V. 7, 10.

All later works which I have examined have the th- forms only.

**Survivals of hem, &c.**

It would probably be correct to say that down to the end of the first quarter of the fifteenth century most texts, except those of the Northern and North-East Midlands, use hem only. After that date th- forms appear very widely alongside the others, though many still have no examples of the latter.

Audelay, St. Editha, Wm. Paston (the Judge, 1425–30), Hoccleve (has, however, themselfe in Minor Poems), Lydgate, Myrc, Bk. of Quint., Bp. Pecok, Const. of Dynevor, Rewle Sustr. Men., J. Buckland's Will (Northants, 1450), appear to have no th- forms; the following have hem by the side of less frequent th- forms:—Siege of Rouen, Hen. V. (in Letter, 1421), Shillingford, Fortescue, Marg. Paston (the Bp. of Exeter's letter in St. Pprs. has only hem), Lord Lovel's Will, 1450, Ordinances of Worcester, Engl. Registers of Godstow and Oseney Abbeyes, Gregory, with whom th- forms are rare, and who has the weak form em—a x of em that felde the strokys, 236, and Caxton. 'Hem occurs in Ben Jonson's Every Man in his Humour, 1598; Marston's Eastward Hoe, 1604; 'Goe Dame, conduct -am in,' Chapman's All Fools, 1605, p. 136; 'em is in frequent use in the colloquial dialogue of the later seventeenth-
century comedies, and occurs occasionally in the letters of the Verney family towards the end of the century—e.g. John V., Mem. iv. 349, 1685, and Nancy Nicholas, iv. 428 (three times), 1688. It is common in serious poetry and prose in the eighteenth century. Milton's own MS. has I saw 'em under a green mantling vine. Com. 294. Note that this form became so widespread in the early eighteenth-century speech that Swift complains that 'young readers in our churches in the prayer for the Royal Family, say endue'um, enrich'um, prosper'um, and bring'um. Tatler, No. 230 (1710). It may be noted that Milton actually puts the apostrophe thus: saw' em.

**Unstressed Forms of the Plural Pronouns.**

The full stressed forms of these are, originally, generally pei, pay, thei, that; peir, pair, their, there; peim, paim, them, thaim, &c.

The only one of these that certainly survives in pronunciation is they; their [ðiː] is doubtful, though it may very possibly represent old their; them is certainly derived from the old weak form.

From the fifteenth century onwards spellings such as the, ther, tham, them are found fairly frequently, and these are weak forms, which show the normal monophthonging of ei, ai in unstressed positions. (On this point see further particulars, pp. 279-80.)

We have now lost the old the, which would have become [ðiː, aiː], and we use the old strong form in all positions, though this no doubt sometimes undergoes a slight reduction when unstressed.

The old weak form ther survives in the form [ðer], which is now rather falling into desuetude. The old weak them survives as a strong form, being used in stressed positions—'They have forgotten me, but I have not forgotten them.' From this we have formed a new weak form [ðem], which we habitually use in unstressed positions.

**Examples of weak the.**

This is the least frequent of the weakened forms, but it occurs in Shillingford, e.g. p. 62, Gregory, and frequently in the letters of Queen Elizabeth. The are all, &c., Lady Sussex, V. Mem. ii. 81 and 82 (1642); thy, Mrs. Basire, 109 (1651) and 135 (1654).

**Examples of weakened ther (thyr).**

Marg. Paston, ther; Bk. of Quint., her; Gregory, there (rarely); Ordinances of Worcester; State of Ireland (St. Pprs., 1515), ther; Skelton's Magnificence, thyr; Q. Elizabeth (in Ltrrs. and in Transl.), ther; Cavendish, L. of Wolsey, ther. Most of these writers generally use their or their, &c.

**Strong and Weak Forms of them.**

Already in the fifteenth century several texts write them only, and this may be due to the influence of hem, which also occurs in these documents. On the other hand, the spellings thaim, thaym are found far into the sixteenth century.

Hoccleve has hardly any th- forms, but themselfe in Minor Poems; Sir J. Fortescue has thaim, them; Shillingford, tham; Ord. of Worcester, them; Lord Lovel's Will, thaym; Marg. Paston, them; Gregory, them; Cr. of Duke of York, thaym, them; State of Ireland (St. Pprs., 1515), them; Skelton, them; Rede me, &c., thaym, passim; J. Mason (Letter, Ellis iii. 2), them; Sir Thos. More (Letter, 1523), thaym more frequently

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* See Appendix V.
NOTES ON INFLEXIONS

than them; Lord Berners, theym, them; Elyot, theym, them; Latimer, theym, them; Cavendish, L. of Wolsey, theym and them; Euphues, them.

You and Ye.

Down to the middle of the sixteenth century writers generally distinguish between Nom. ye and Acc. Dat. you. The Pl. forms already in M.E. are used in respectful address to a single person.

While, for instance, Sir Thos. More and Lord Berners distinguish between ye and you, Bp. Latimer, Ascham, Cavendish, and Euphues use both forms indifferently for the Nom. Q. Elizabeth appears to employ you alone for Nom. and oblique cases, Sing. and Pl. On the whole, in the sixteenth century, while you is common as a Nom., ye is much rarer as an Acc. or Dat.

Ye is sometimes introduced merely for variety, cf. Ascham—‘you that be shoters, I pray you, what mean ye when ye take’, &c., Tox. 101.

In the seventeenth century you is far commoner than ye in Nom., though the latter is not infrequent. Sir Edmund Verney, in 1642, uses ye after a preposition—any of ye, V. Mem. ii. 136.

A distinction was formerly made between thou, thee, and you, in the sense that the former was used by superiors, or seniors in addressing their inferiors or juniors, and in the familiar and affectionate speech of parents addressing their children.

Sir Thos. More's son-in-law, Roper, in his Life of that famous man, represents him as addressing the writer—'Sonne Roper’—as thou, thee, but himself as using you in speaking to Sir Thomas More.

The Weak a for he.

This form scarcely survives at present except in the archaic literary quotha.

Ha and a are fairly common in M.E. in texts of the South-West and South-West Midlands—e. g. quodha, St. Juliana (MS. Royal); a is used by Trevisa as a Neuter or Masculine; other Southern texts use ha as a Pl. Nom. The Constable of Dynevor Castle (temp. Hen. IV) uses a both for he and they, Ellis ii. x. 16; Latimer, Sermons, writes 'here was a not gyltie', 153.

Henry Verney writes, in 1644—'a dyed one newersday a is tomorrow caried to his own church', V. Mem. ii. 204, and in 1647—'a proves by fits very bad', Mem. ii. 361.

hit and it.

The old spelling hit, hyt, persists nearly to the end of the sixteenth century, although the weak it is found as early as the twelfth century in E. Midland, and in the London dialect in the poems of Davie (c. 1327). Hit or hyt is still the only spelling in many sixteenth-century documents, while in others yt, &c., preponderates, and in others again hit or hyt is the more frequent. Sir Thos. Elyot has hit more frequently than it in his Will, but the conditions are reversed in the Gouernour; Machyn uses hyt but rarely; Queen Elizabeth writes hit with very great frequency in her Letters and Translations alike, yt being only occasionally used.

It can hardly be doubted that in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the aspirate was lost in unstressed positions, and the spelling h- was an archaism. At the same time it is possible that some speakers still pro-
nounced *hit* when the word was stressed. Since the other Personal Pronouns which began with *h-* all had both strong and weak forms, there is no reason why the old strong form of the Neuter Pronoun should not also have been retained. By the end of the century, apparently, the *h-* form had disappeared from ordinary colloquial English.

*The Possessive Neuter* *its.*

I have found no trace of the present-day *its* during the sixteenth century, my earliest reference being in Charles Butler's English Grammar of 1634, p. 40. As Butler was born in 1560, it seems probable that *its* was in use in his youth, since it is unlikely that he would incorporate, without comment, a form which was a recent innovation.

At the same time, the form was evidently felt as a colloquialism at the beginning of the century, for it is avoided in the Authorized Version. Queen Elizabeth uses *his* of 'the matters' (Letters to J. VI, 3), Euphues has *his* referring to 'learning'. Shakespeare does not use *its*.

Ascham, we may note, uses *he, hym*, speaking of a bow, *Tox.*, p. 116.

The earliest reference in O.E.D. is 1598. Charles Butler's *Gr.* (1634) gives *its* without any comment.

Milton writes *his*—*Now the spell has lost his hold.* *Com.* 919.

*The Forms* *hir* and *her.*

The old form of the oblique cases of the Fem. Pronoun is represented by the M.E. and Early Modern *hir, hyr,* and these forms persist until towards the end of the sixteenth century. Latimer, Ascham, Euphues, and Lord Burghley in his letters, all have *hir* and *hyr,* and these on the whole are the more usual forms in letters and printed books throughout the greater part of the century, though in many *her* is found also. The spelling *her,* which may represent a lowering of the vowel in unstressed positions, before *-r,* a process which may have been helped by the analogy of the Nom. *he* in those M.E. dialects which employed this form for *she,* is found very commonly in M.E. by the side of *hir,* but the more careful scribes distinguish between the Possess., &c., Fem., and the Possess. Pl., keeping *her* for the latter and *hir,* &c., for the former. In the fifteenth century Hoccleve has *hir* only; *her* is found in the London official documents, in the Rewle Sustr. Men., which text often distinguishes the cases—*her,* Acc., *here,* Possess. and Dat.—in Lydgate's Poems, Lord Lovel's *Will,* Márg. *Paston—herr, here, hers,* by the side of *hyr.* Caxton has both forms. Cely Pprs., Gregory, the *Will* of Sir Thos. Cumberworth, *Lincs., 1451,* all have *hir, hyr.* Sir J. Fortescue has *huyr.* Hen. VIII, in a letter of 1515, writes *har,* Acc. and Possess., a survival of a M.E. unstressed form often found in the South-Eastern dialect.

Edward VI, First P. B., seems to have *her* only. *Hir* is still very common in the Verney Memoirs; see especially the letters of Sir Ralph.

The weak form without the *h-* is rather rare; however, *hoselder* 'houselled her' occurs in St. Editha, and *carrer* 'carry her' in Verney Mem., Henry V., Mem. ii. 366, 1647.

*Indiscriminate use of I and me.*

It is not uncommon at the present time to hear *I* used instead of *me* after a Verb or Preposition, as though the speaker wished to avoid the latter form. 'What have they to do with you and *I*?' writes Sir John
Suckling in a letter to Aglaura, Wks., ii, p. 198. The phrase *between you and I* is used by Tom Verney, V. Mem. iii. 173, 1657, and by Lady Hobart, V. Mem. iv. 57, 1664; *It must all light upon Hearstree and I* is said by Belinda in Vanbrugh’s Provok’t Wife, Wks. vol. ii, 363.

In 1734 Lady Strafford writes *Lady Anne Harvey invited my love and I*, Wentw. Pprs. 499.

A habit more characteristic than the above, of illiterate speakers, is the use of *me* as a Nom. Susan Verney writes, in 1645, *Sis peg and me got an opportunity*, &c.

Miss Austen makes that rather underbred young woman, Miss Lucy Steele, say *Anne and me are to go there later*, Sense and Sensibility, i, ch. 24.

**IV**

**The Articles.**

**Survival of M.E. *thoo.***

The form *thoo, þō, &c.*, originally the Pl. of the Def. Article, O.E. þā, survives into the sixteenth century, generally, it is true, with a rather more definite Demonstrative sense than belongs to the Article, sometimes with the full force of the Demonstr. *those*. See my *Short Hist. of Engl.*, § 287, for details of the late M.E. use of þō.

Pecok appears to use the form practically as the Pl. of the Art. in *tho writings, tho deedis to be doon*, Repr. 1. 23; *alle tho whiche*, ibid., is more definitely Demonstrative. The form occurs in the Bk. of Quintessence, *bo men*, in the Will of J. Buckland, in Rewle Sustr. Men. (*þoo*), in Gregory—*one of thoø*, 140, *thoo that*, 233, and in Caxton.

The latest example I have found of *thoo* is in a list of ships of Hen. VIII’s time, 1513, in the sense of *those*, Ellis ii. 218.

**Indefinite Article.**

The stressed M.E. form *oo* survives in Gregory—*oo place*, 153.

*A* instead of *an* is sometimes used before vowels—*a Englyssche squyer*, Gregory, 184; *a increasing, a ivel name*, Q. Elizabeth in a letter, Ellis i. 2. 157, 1549.

**V**

**Verbal Endings.**

**Ending of the 3rd Pers. Singular Pres. Indicative.**

In M.E. the Southern dialects have universally *-eth* and *-iþ*. The E. Midland has almost exclusively the *-þ*, *-th* ending, except, very occasionally, *-es, -is*, and then chiefly in rhymes. W. Midland has the *-s* ending far more frequently. Chaucer seems to have *-es* only once, and then in a rhyme.

In the fifteenth century the *-th* forms (*-yth, -iþh, -eth*) very largely hold their own in the South, the E. Midlands, and in the London dialect, with occasional outcrops of sporadic *-s* forms.
Thus, the essentially provincial and usually archaic St. Editha, while generally preserving -eth as the usual form, writes also comys, 617, he louys, 2028. The E. Midland Bokenam has only -yth, &c., with the rarest exception, and even some of the Lincolnshire Wills of the fifteenth century write -ith as the usual type, with rarer -eth, but -es very rarely indeed, though Sir T. Cumberworth's Will has several -s forms, and apparently no -ih, L. D. D. 45. It is noteworthy that in a Will of 1465 ligges occurs, apparently as the only form of its kind. This appears to be a lapse into dialect as regards the form of the word (lig = 'lie'), with a Northern suffix retained to avoid the incongruity of liggeth.

Wm. Paston, the judge, has only -yth. Marg. Paston has few, if any, forms of ending other than -yth; Palladius has -ep, Pecok only -ieth; Fortescue, and Shillingford, and Ord. of Worcester, -yth, -ith, with occasional -eth; the Wills from Bucks., Oxfordshire, and Northants only -yth, -eth. Cely Papers have -yth as a rule, though the younger members of the family often use -es, -ys as well.

Passing to London English, the fifteenth-century official documents have an overwhelmingly large proportion of -ith forms, with a trifling number of -s forms, which might be counted on the fingers of one hand. Other prose documents which show no particular Regional influence generally agree with this, but poetical writers, for purposes of metre or rhyme, begin to use forms in -s. Thus, while Lydgate (a Suffolk man) has in his poems frequent forms in -es, and Siege of Rouen has putlys, 32, ashyse, 33, Capgrave, according to Dibelius, has only one such form, and the Bk. of Quintessence and the Rewle of Sustr. Men. have -ith, -ip only.

In the sixteenth century, apart from poetry, -ith, &c., is practically universal in literary prose, official documents, and in private letters, until well into the third quarter of the century. To this the Sermons of Bp. Latimer, preached in 1549, form an exception, but it must be remembered that we possess these only in the form in which they were printed thirty years or so later, and it is possible that we owe some of the peculiarities to the editor or the printer.

At the same time, Latimer's language shows certain traces of provincialism in other directions, and the -s forms may be perfectly genuine and characteristic of the bishop's dialect. At any rate, I have noted about sixty-three examples in Arber's Reprint of the Sermons, side by side with many -eth forms. In Thos. Lever's Sermons (1550) there are a few -s forms, though the first of these seems to occur on p. 65, where it is put into the mouth of what the preacher calls 'rude lobbes of the country', who are supposed to say: 'he minisheth Gods servants, he slubbers up his service who cannot reade the humbles.' The 3rd Sing. Pres. is very rare in any form in Machyn's Diary, but he lys occurs, pp. 181, 204, lyys, lyys, 146, gyffes, 147. Gabriel Harvey uses -s forms in his letters occasionally, especially in the more familiar letters—smels, 18, hopes, heares, 23. When writing to the Master of his College he uses only -ith forms. Cavendish, Life of Wolsey, has very few -s forms, -ieth, -yth being nearly universal, but I have noted me semys, p. 60. Ascham has at least twenty examples of -s in Toxophilus, of which endures, 39, occurs in a metrical line, and leaues, 91, 'also in a verse. Sir Thos. Smith nearly always writes -eth in Republ., but gettes, ibid., p. 67. Queen Elizabeth, in her
later letters (to James VI) and in the Translations writes -s, by the side of -eth, &c., very frequently. In the latter, -s is much commoner than -th. The -s forms are not so frequent in those letters in Ellis written when the Queen was a girl, but methinkes occurs in 1572, Ellis i. 2. 263. The Auxiliaries doth and hath are nearly always so written in all the Queen's writings. In Wilson's Arte of Rhetorique -eth and -s forms are both frequent, the latter occurring more commonly than in Ascham, especially in the less stately and solemn passages. In the Letters of Lord Burghley (Ellis, and Bardon Papers), so far as I can see, and in Euphues, none but -th forms are found. Bacon, in his Essays, seems invariably to use the -th ending.

From the beginning of the seventeenth century the 3rd Singular Present nearly always ends in -s in all kinds of prose writing except in the state­liest and most lofty. Evidently the translators of the Authorized Version of the Bible regarded -s as belonging only to familiar speech, but the exclusive use of -eth here, and in every edition of the Prayer Book, may be partly due to the tradition set by the earlier Biblical translations and the early editions of the Prayer Book respectively. Except in liturgical prose, then, -eth becomes more and more uncommon after the beginning of the seventeenth century; it is the survival of this and not the re­urrence of -s which is henceforth noteworthy. The -th forms are common in Sir Thomas Browne, but his style is not typical of his age.

The letters in the Verney Memoirs contain a few examples of -eth which show that this survived even in familiar and colloquial language down to the middle of the century.

Tom Verney writes telleth, Mem. ii. 156, 1646; Lady Verney, expres­seth, ii. 246, 1646; Sir Ralph has 'on (= one) loseth his time, the other spends his money', ii. 247, 1646, and 'my Lady Browne telleth me', iii. 70, 1650. In Tom Jones, Fielding makes Parson Supple, the hypocritical chaplain, say 'You behold, Sir, how he waxeth wroth at your abode here', vol. i, p. 312, First Ed.

The -s forms are usually ascribed to Northern influence, but this cannot conceivably have been exerted directly, and one naturally turns to the East Midland dialects, which so often were the undoubted medium whereby Northern forms have reached London English, as the probable channel in this case also. In this instance, however, the forms are almost as rare in the fifteenth century in the works of writers from Suffolk, Norfolk, and even from Lincolnshire, as they are in the docu­ments of London and of the South generally. It must be mentioned, however, that Norf. Guild Returns, 1389, have numerous -s forms in the documents of the Guild of St. Thomas of Canterbury, but elsewhere -ith. It is true, also, that Lydgate of Bury has -s forms in abundance, and it is possible that in other E. Midland documents, especially the official writings such as the Suffolk and some Lincolnshire Wills of the fifteenth century, the writers deliberately avoided these forms and assimilated their usage to that still prevailing in London, although the forms may have been in the normal colloquial usage of these areas. This, however, would not apply to Bokenam, who shows few if any traces of specific London influence. It is perhaps rather a far-fetched assumption that the E. Midland writers of the fifteenth century conceal their normal speech
habit in this respect, while all the time the very peculiarity which does
not emerge in their writings was in existence and was gradually in­fluencing London speech. Again, it is significant that some of the
earliest -s forms are found in St. Editha, and few will attribute Northern
influence to this Wiltshire text. Some other explanation must be sought.
They are also not infrequent in the letters of the younger Celys (Essex)
in third quarter of fifteenth century, and they are here clearly a colloquial
feature. It has been suggested that the -s forms of the 3rd Sing. passed
into prose literature from the poetical writings, and from prose literature
to colloquial speech. This now appears to me highly improbable. It is
ture that the exigencies of rhyme and metre make it convenient to sub­stitute the forms in -s for those in -i th in verse. By this means a syllable
is got rid of, and the possibilities of rhyme enormously increased. Thus,
at a time when -s is comparatively rare in prose writings of any sort—
that is, down to the middle of the sixteenth century—the ending often
appears in poetry. But it is hard to believe that what was destined to
become the only form in the colloquial language should have come into
that form of English primarily from poetry. It is more likely that the
use of the -s forms in poetry is quite independent of their introduction
into colloquial English. The use of those forms made by Ascham and
Queen Elizabeth strikes one as reflecting a prevalent habit of ordinary
speech. We might suspect Northern influence in the case of Ascham,
a Yorkshireman, but not in the Queen and her contemporaries generally.
The avoidance of them—in Euphues—by the highly correct Lyly is not
consistent with a purely literary origin. Had he regarded these forms as
primarily poetical, why should he not have employed them in his essen­tially artificial dialogue? On the other hand, if Lyly regarded the -s
ending as an innovation, associated with familiar colloquial speech, he
was just the man to set his face against them in writing such a work as
Euphues. The -s forms in Machyn are certainly the result of colloquial
usage, as this writer is not the man to take his grammar from the poets,
nor, indeed, from literature of any sort.

It is more in accordance with what we know of the relations of the
Spoken language to the language of Literature to suppose that the
feature we are considering passed, in the first instance, into everyday
usage, quite independently of the poets, and thence into the prose style
of literature. It is evident that the number of persons who read poetry
must at any time be very small in comparison with the population as a
whole; and poetical diction, in so far as it differs from that of ordinary
life, can exercise but a slight influence upon the colloquial language at
large. If the -s forms of the 3rd Sing. Present gained currency primarily
from poetical and then from prose literature, it would be difficult to
explain how, in a comparatively short time, they attained such univer­sality of usage, and also, allowing for the weight of tradition in favour of
the older form, why they should have been felt as too colloquial to be
admitted at all into Liturgical English in any form, and into the Autho­rized Version.

But all this is purely negative, and does not account for the appearance
of the forms and their gradual complete acceptance in a dialect area to
which they were originally quite alien.
We are placed in this dilemma, that the only apparent possible inter­mediary between the North and London and the South, by which a dialectal peculiarity could pass, is the E. Midland area, whereas this particular characteristic does not appear to be especially widespread in the E. Midland dialects, or among such writers as might be expected to show direct influence from these dialects in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries—e. g. Bokenam, Gregory, Capgrave, Bury Wills, some of the Lincs. Wills, Marg. Paston.

From this dilemma the theory which saddles the poets ultimately with giving currency to the -s forms in the Spoken language, if it can be accepted, offers an easy escape. If, in spite of the improbabilities which have been urged against it, this view commends itself to the reader, he will have no further difficulty. It is possible, however, that the starting-point of the -s forms has nothing to do with Regional influence, but that the extremely common Auxiliary is may have provided the model. I am inclined to think that this is the true explanation of the 3rd Pers. Pres. in -s in the Spoken dialect of London and the South, and in the English of Literature.

A few remarks upon the use of these forms by the poets down to the first half of the sixteenth century will not be out of place.

The -s forms were a great boon to writers of verse, both in supplying rhymes, and metrically, in providing a form with a syllable less than the -eth form of the same verb.

Thus poets often make use of these forms both in rhyme and in the middle of lines. As regards the fifteenth century, while Lydgate often employs these forms, Hoccleve does not, and Stephen Hawes appears to make but moderate use of them. Skelton, who was born in 1460, and may therefore be regarded as belonging to the late fifteenth century from a linguistic point of view, makes frequent use of the -s endings (-is, -ys, -es, -s) in such a rough coarse satire as 'Why come ye nat to Courte?', but generally writes -th in his more delicate work, such as Phyllyp Sparowe; in Magnyficence he has usually -eth, but also she lokys, 925, he ne reckys, 1168, rhymes spekys, 2nd Pers. S.

It has already been mentioned that the Wilts. writer of St. Editha has a few -s forms, while the Suffolk writer Bokenam has practically none.

The Earl of Surrey has many of these endings, the sonnet The Swete sesoun alone having springes, brings, singes, flinges, slinges, minges all rhyming, besides decayes, and they occur with fair frequency in all his love poems and in the translation of the Aeneid. Sir Thomas Wyatt the Elder has a great many in his Satires. Lord Buckhurst, in the Induc­tion, has twenty -s forms in the seventy-nine seven-line verses.

The only -th endings are hath, four times, doth, doeth, three times, and ceaseth, once. Hath and doth survive long after -s has become universal in English, but so far as the metre is concerned it is evident that has would do just as well, and the same is true of does. The spelling doeth, which occurs in verse 69 of the Induction, is monosyllabic—'mine iyes. . . . That fylde with teares as doeth the sprygnyng well.' The form ceaseth, verse 49, is metrically of the same value as ceases, which might, therefore, have been used had the poet wished. All the -s forms in the poem are necessary for the metre, and in the only cases where
there was any option Lord Buckhurst has written -th in preference to -s. All these facts, taken together with the arguments stated earlier, seem to me to confirm the view that the -s ending was of colloquial, not of literary origin, in Standard English, and that it arose in various areas in the South, not through external Regional influence but as a result of a natural and widespread analogy. The ending may have had currency first among the humbler classes (cf. the Celys and Machyn), and its usage for convenience in poetry may have hastened its acceptance in the colloquial speech of the better classes.

**Forms of the 3rd Pers. Present Singular without Inflexion.**

At the present time such forms may occasionally be heard from vulgar and uneducated speakers. I noticed, some years ago in Essex, that such phrases as ‘he come every day to see me’, ‘he always take sugar in his tea’, and so on, were very common.

In earlier times these flexionless 3rd Singul ars were used by far more distinguished persons. The origin of the omission is presumably the analogy of the 1st Person.

I have noted a few from the fifteenth century onwards:—Marg. Paston, commaud, i. 246; Lord Berners, methynke, i. 250; Latimer, methynke, Seven Sermons, 133; Ascham, methincke, Tox. 100; Q. Elizabeth, ‘as your secreterye terme it’, Lttrs. to J. VI, 30; Wentworth Pprs., ‘my cossen hear take great delight in fishing, and ketch many’, 47; ‘the town tell a world of stories of Lady Masham’, Peter W., 408.

**The Endings of the Present Indicative Plural.**

In M.E. the ending -ep, -ip in the Present Pl. is typical of the Southern dialects, and -en of the Midland, especially of E. Midland. From the middle of the thirteenth century onwards London texts, by the side of the Southern -ep, have a preponderance of the E. Midland -en type of Pres. Pls. The weakened ending -e, with loss of final -n, was still further weakened, sometimes, even in the fourteenth century, and from this type our present-day form, without any suffix, is derived. Chaucer generally writes -en in his prose, -e being rare. In his poetry both forms occur very commonly, but in rhymes -e is almost universal.

The history of the Present Pl. during the Modern period is concerned (1) with the gradual loss of the final -n, and the ultimate fixing of the prevailing type as one with no ending at all; (2) with the survival, for a considerable period, alongside the -en, or the flexionless type, of the ending -eth, -ith; (3) with the appearance of a Pl. ending in -es, -ys, -s.

Now this last is still, as it was in M.E., and even in O.E., a characteristic feature of the Northern dialects. Whether the use of this suffix, sporadically, from about the middle of the sixteenth century in Literary English, and in the colloquial speech of educated persons in the South of England, is to be ascribed to Northern influence, is quite another matter. We shall discuss this question later on.

**The Present Indicative Plural in -en, -e.**

We should expect, from what we know of M.E., to find that in the fifteenth century -en or -e would be the sole, or at least the prevailing type of
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ending in London English, and that -eth, -ith, &c., would occur only in texts written by Southerners. As a matter of fact, the latter suffix is by no means so rare in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries as we might expect, even in the writings of those whom we have no reason to suspect of Regional tendencies. It would appear that the literary and official documents of the late fourteenth century do not give us an altogether true picture of actual speech habit in this respect, and that the -ip-Plurals must have survived in the colloquial speech of large sections of the population, over a considerable area, although expressed comparatively rarely in the written form of English. This type of ending survives long after the disappearance of -n. The appearance of the -e endings marks a further and later stage. These appear some time after the loss of -n and at a period in which ith, &c., is a rarity.

It must be ascribed to the indirect influence of London speech, in its written form, that the -en type either very largely predominates, or is at least represented, from quite early in the fifteenth century, even in documents whose authors might be expected to stick to a pure Southern form.

Thus, Palladius (Essex) generally writes -eth, but has occasional -en; the Constable of Dynevor, by the side of we fayleth, 15, has also they seyen 'see', 16, and han 'have', Ellis ii. 1; St. Editha has stydith, 8, but dwelle, 57; the Devonian Fortescue has only -en, -yn, or -e; Shillingford has semeth, 12, menyih, 16, but more often -en, reqyren, 30, seyn 'say', 40, 131, &c., deserven, 131, touchyn, 132 (-en occurs most commonly in the legal and official documents in the Shillingford Pprs., and in Shillingford's letter to the Chancellor; this ending is commoner in the letter of the Bishop of Exeter than in S.'s own letters or those of his friends).

Turning to writers whom we might suspect of specific E. Midland tendencies:—Bokenam has -e or -yn; William Paston, the judge, has -en or -e; Marg. Paston has generally -yn—jeoyn, i. 168, or no ending—ye thenk, i. 224, but maketh, ii. 124; Gregory, the Cockney from Suffolk, -yn, -e, or no ending—belevyn, 75, depuyyn, 124, behole 'promise', 125, long, 201, but also longyte, 134.

These writers, as we should expect, hardly differ from the London usage in this particular case.

We may now describe the characteristics of a certain number of typical Literary English texts. Hoccleve has only -en; Rewle Sustr. Men. very commonly -in, purchassin, 81. 4, longin, 33. 2, &c., &c., but also pey singip, 110. 9, pey eitp, 111. 17, pey redip, 116. 17 and 20; Bk. of Quint., -en with occasional -ip; State of Ireland, St. Pprs. of Hen. VIII, 1515, has frequent examples of -yth, but -en occasionally—there bin more then 60 comites, p. 1. Lord Surrey has ben, Aeneid, Bk. ii. 735. This is the latest -en form in prose in my collections until we get to Euphues, in which work I have noted they loaden, 144. This is a better example than that quoted by Bradley on p. 257 of his edition of Morris's Historical Outlines, from Shakespeare—'and waxen in their mirth'—since the additional syllable is here added for the sake of the metre. The same applies to Wyatt's 'you that blamen', Tottel, 37. On the whole, Ben Jonson's remark in his English Grammar, that the ending -en was used 'till about the reign of Henry VIII' is correct, but it should be qualified and limited to the beginning of the reign, for we must regard the exam-
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amples just quoted from Surrey, Wyatt, and Euphues as literary archaisms, which do not represent the usage of the spoken language. This applies also to Spenser's deliberate archaisms—*bene*, rhymes *lene*, *weene*, &c. As late, however, as 1605 Congreve makes Ben Legend, a rough sailor, though a gentleman's son, say 'as we sayn at sea', Love for Love, Act III, Sc. vi.

Mention may be made of three fifteenth-century texts written in the South-West Midlands:—the English Register of Godstow Abbey (1450) has *-th* Pls., in *-eth* and *-eth*, very frequently, especially in the first, liturgical portions of the work, but also many in *-en*, and some in *-e*; the English Register of Oseney Abbey, Oxfordshire, c. 1460, has *they hauen, they helden*, 53, but *-n* is rather rare, *-e* being commoner, and *-p* forms being apparently absent; the Ordinances of Worcester have *-en* or *-e*.

The Central Midlands, as represented by the Coventry Leet Bk., have *-en, -yn*.

**The Survival of Pres. Pls. in -eth, -ith.**

We have seen that these are in use in documents over a very wide area, besides in the London and Literary English throughout the fifteenth century, we have now to trace them through the following century and beyond. The chief examples I have noted are:—St. of Ireland, St. Pprs. Hen. VIII, iii, 1515, *-y Pl* is very common—e.g. *some callyth, 1, messengers comyth, 14, they payeth, 5, &c., &c.;* Skelton, Magnyf., 'your clothes smellethe musty', 761, *Her eyen gray and stepe, Causeth mine herte to lepe, Phyll. Sparowe, 1015;* Sir Thos. Elyot, *besemeth, 7, haris lepeth, 245, people take the comforte, 45, other foules and besis which herdeth and focketh, 2, 210, after exploits hapneth occasions, 2, 429; Lord Berners, *other ihynges lyeth at my hart, 1, 194, your Knightes abideth for you to wasshe, 1, 195, what wetheth the Frenchmen, 1, 328, their husbandes payeth, 1, 352;* Archbp. Cranmer, Your Lordships hath bene thorowly enformed, Ellis i. 2. 172; Bp. Latimer, *the mountains smelteth, Seven Ser., 31, goth, 41, kepeth, 74;* Cavendish, L. of Wolsey, them that hath, 245; Ascham occasionally uses *hath, doth* in Pl.—*as wild horses doth race, Tox. 8;* Q. Elizabeth, the ('they') or most deserved that trusteth most in theirselves, Ellis i. 2. 156, 1549; *who seekith . . . the may, &c., Transi., breakith, Transi., 132;* Sir Thos. Smith, *the father and mother sendeth them out in couples, Rep. Angl. 24;* Spenser, State of Ireland, *the upper garment which serving men weareth, p. 623, col. 2;* Euphues—*whose barkes seemeth, 231, pleasant sirroppes doth chyfiest infect a delicate taste, 306.*

In the seventeenth century the Verney Memoirs have a few examples:—

*I believe others doth doe that, Lady V., ii. 252, 1647, Elders who . . . asketh them such questions, Lady V., ii. 259, 1647.*

It seems evident from these examples that the Southern *-th* Plurals survived longer in good usage than might be gathered from the late M.E. literary works. This form is one of the Southern characteristics of the original London dialect which were gradually ousted by E. Midland encroachments, but it lingered long in the conservative usage of the upper classes of society.
Present Plurals in -s.

This form of the Pres. Indic. Pl., which survives to the present time as a vulgarism, is by no means very rare in the second half of the sixteenth century among writers of all classes, and was evidently in good colloquial usage well into the eighteenth century. I do not think that many students of English would be inclined to put down the present-day vulgarism to North country or Scotch influence, since it occurs very commonly among uneducated speakers in London and the South, whose speech, whatever may be its merits or defects, is at least untouched by Northern dialect. The explanation of this peculiarity is surely analogy with the Singular. The tendency is to reduce Sing. and Pl. to a common form, so that certain sections of the people inflect all Persons of both Sing. and Pl. with -s after the pattern of the 3rd Pers. Sing., while others drop the suffix even in the 3rd Sing., after the model of the un-inflected 1st Pers. Sing. and the Pl. of all Persons.

But if this simple explanation of the present-day Pl. in -s be accepted, why should we reject it to explain the same form at an earlier date?

It would seem that the present-day vulgarism is the lineal traditional descendant of what was formerly an accepted form. The -s Plurals do not appear until the -s forms of the 3rd Sing. are already in use. They become more frequent in proportion as these become more and more firmly established in colloquial usage, though, in the written records which we possess they are never anything like so widespread as the Singular -s forms. Those who persist in regarding the sixteenth-century Plurals in -s as evidence of Northern influence on the English of the South must explain how and by what means that influence was exerted. The view would have had more to recommend it, had the forms first appeared after James VI of Scotland became King of England. In that case they might have been set down as a fashionable Court trick. But these Plurals are far older than the advent of James to the throne of this country.

The earliest example I have noted occurs, strangely enough, in the Report on the State of Ireland in St. Pprs. Hen. VIII, iii, 1515, p. 15, the noble folk of the land shotes at hym. This sentence is the more remarkable in that there are no 3rd Pers. Sing. in -s in this text, and that Pls. in -th abound. It is just conceivable, though unlikely, that folk is here regarded as a Singular Collective Noun, and that the Verb is therefore also Singular. Sir Thomas Wyatt the Elder has for swine so grones, which rhymes none, bones, Satire to Sir F. Bryan, 18, 1540. Bp. Latimer, in his Sermons, has a certain number of -s Plurals:—standes, 87, some that lives, 179, there be some twriters that saies, 188, some sayes, 189. As we have seen above, the bishop often uses -s in the 3rd Sing. Machyn has after them comys harolds, 40. The only forms of the 3rd Sing. which I have found in this Diary end in -s (cf. p. 333), but they are so few that we cannot judge with certainty whether this was Machyn's usual form, nor how far the -s Plural may have been influenced by it. Lord Buckhurst, Induction, has 'And as the stone that drops of water weares', rhyming with teares, Noun, v. 12. Ascham has the cordes have no thing to stop them, but whippets so far back, &c.;
Queen Elizabeth has many examples, especially in her Translations, but some also in her later letters (to James VI). A few examples:—all our subjectes lokes after, Lttrs. 31, small flies stiks fast for wekenis, L. 41, your commissionars tells me, ibid. 44, sild recouers kings ther dominion, ibid. 58; in the Translations we have:—roring windz the seas perturbz, 4, all men hides them, 132, as the hunters rates ther hounds, 134, men that runs, 135, &c., &c. Thos. Wilson, Arte of Rhet., has some speakes some spettes, 220. There are seventeen forms in -s after some on this one page.

The Verney Papers have how things goes here, Sir R. V., 1639; covenants has forbidden any man to read it, 240; Verney Memoirs—My Lady and Sir tomos remembers their services to you and Mrs. Gardiner, Cary V., ii. 68, 1642, both sides promisis, &c., Lady Sussex, ii. 252, 1647, the late noyses of risings puts me in a fear, &c., Cary Stewkley (Verney), iii. 439, 1659.

In the Wentworth Papers Lady W. and her son Peter both use these forms:—which moste lauhgs at, 52, 1706, all people from the highist to the lowist stairs (i.e. 'stares') after them, 57; several affirms, 123 (Peter W.); Lord Wentworth and Lady Hariot gives their duty to your Lordship, Lady A. Wentworth, a child, 453, 1724; Lord Garsy and Mr. Varnum both coms in the somer shears, 55; all others sends fowls, 59; Peter and his wife coms tomorrow, 127; my letters that informs you, 107 (Peter W.); Two of the prettiest young peers in England... who, by the way, makes no pretty figure, 395 (Peter W.); Mrs. Lawson and Mrs. Ogletorpe gives their service to you, 444 (Lord Bute).

Note. The use of is and was with a Plural Subject will be dealt with under the Auxiliaries, p. 356.

The Infinitive.

The usual M.E. ending in the Midlands and South is -en, but forms without -n are found quite early. A typical Southern ending of the Inf. is -y, -ie, &c., which represents the O.E. -ian suffix, and is generalized widely, especially in Verbs of French origin, in the dialects of the South-East and South-West.

The -n termination hardly survives in written documents beyond the third quarter of the fifteenth century, and by that time the examples are scarce.

All fifteenth-century writers use Infinitives in -e, even when they occasionally keep -en or -yn. Hoccleve has han, usen, synkyn, wedden; Const. of Dynevor, to welyn, Ellis ii. 1. 14; Rewle Sustr. Men. is rather rich in -n forms—to herin, 90, &c., bey schullen dwellin, 94, 21, we commande... senden, enioinen, 95. 14, bowen, 113. 12, knelyn, 115. 38, &c.; Fortescue generally has -e or no ending, e.g. gyf, but helpen, 152; Marg. Paston has numerous forms in -n—ye vol askyn, i. 49, to heryn, i. 67, buyn 'buy', i. 68, sellyn, i. 69, &c., &c.; Bokenam has seen, delvyyn, accepyn, adver- tysyn, geuyen, lesyn, &c.; Gregory has a fair number of -n forms—usyn, 82, foloyyn, 91, procedyn, 99, ken, 99, heryn, 99, doen, 99, selten, selyyn, 117, and also rather strangely a few forms in-y—delvery, 118, answery, 231 (twice), ymageny, 231; the Godstow Register usually has -e or no ending, but falryn, 25; Caxton has very few examples of -n, but ouertaken, Jason 50. 5. The -y type is found also in St. Editha—to correctly, 238.
A late example in prose is *he and I wyll commen*, in a letter of Thos. Pery, 1539, Ellis ii. 2. 148.

A late survival, or rather revival, of -en, for metrical reasons, is seen in Lord Buckhurst's *I can accusen none*, Complaint of Duke of Buckingham, 147.

**The Prefix y- in Past Participles.**

This prefix, which is still much used by Chaucer, is comparatively rare in the poems of Hoccleve. In the Reg. of Pr. he writes *ypynchid, yput*, but generally omits the prefix in Strong Verbs. In the Minor Poems, however, we have *itake, isalle*. On the whole during the fifteenth century the use of the prefix is chiefly confined to texts which show a more or less strongly marked Southern provincial influence, whether South-Eastern or South-Western. Thus it is frequent in the letter of the Constable of Dynevor Castle, in Shillingford, in the Register of Oseney, where it is almost universal in Strong and Weak Verbs, in the R. of Godstow, where, however, it is less frequent, especially in Strong Verbs. In St. Editha the prefix is often written and crossed out again in the MS., though it is also fairly often not erased, and often not written at all. In the South-East the prefix is very common in Palladius, but very rare in the much later Cely Papers; the Suffolk dialect, as represented by Bokenam, shows no example of it, nor does Marg. Paston. Fortescue, from whom one might expect this Southernism, appears not to write y- at all in Strong Verbs and very rarely in Weak, though I have noted *i-blissed*, 155; Pecok seems to have no examples in vol. i of the Repressor, and there are none in the Ordinances of Worcester, nor those of Exeter.

Of texts written more specifically in the London dialect, the Suffolk man Gregory has a fair sprinkling of Past Participles, Strong and Weak, with i-, and Rewle of Sustr. Men. a few. Apparently Gregory's forms were not derived from his native dialect, so we must regard them as belonging to a rather archaic form of London speech. Caxton makes no use of the prefix, nor is it found in the later Cr. of Knt. of Bath, which is a better example on the whole of the higher type of London English. After this the prefix is only used by poets who are more or less deliberately archaic. An interesting form—*storm ybeten*—occurs in Skelton's Magnyfycence, a word which suggests the Spenserian period of Keats. Spenser's imitation of Chaucer is doubtless chiefly responsible for the occasional use of the i-forms by later poets.

**VI**

**The Strong Verbs.**

The following is but the slightest sketch of the development of these Verbs in the Modern period. The examples given of the forms of the members of each class are intended mainly to show on the one hand the survival of old forms, and on the other the adoption of those now in use. It is evident that a much larger collection of forms would be necessary to achieve, with anything like completeness, either of these objects. In fact a special monograph would be required, which I may possibly undertake when circumstances permit. The excellent monograph of Price on
Strong Verbs from Caxton to the End of the Elizabethan Period contains a great deal of material which I have not incorporated here, the following short account being based on part of my own collections. We want an account dealing with these Verbs from 1400 or so until the end of the eighteenth century. Caxton is not a good starting-point, nor is the end of the Elizabethan period the end of the story. I now regret that I did not make much larger collections from the Verney Memoirs and the Wentworth Papers, as well as from later eighteenth-century sources.

The apparent irregularities in the Strong Verbs during the Middle and Modern periods, compared with the conditions in O.E., are due to the working of analogy in various directions.

The fact that originally there were two, three, and in some cases four types in a single class of Verbs, and that there was a certain variety of treatment of each type according to Regional dialect, has given a very considerable number of possible types for the Preterite and Past Participle of some classes. Added to this there is the transference of Verbs from one class to another which while closely resembling it, yet differed from it in certain respects. Thus *speak* has been transferred to the class to which *break* belongs. The result of this was first to produce a new P. P. *spoken*, on the analogy of *broken*, and then to call into existence a new Preterite *broke* on the pattern of the new P. P.

During the M.E. period the tendency was to get rid of the distinction between the Singular and Plural in the Preterite in those classes where this originally existed. In the North and East Midland it was usually the old Singular Preterite which survived as the sole type for that tense. In the South-West, on the other hand, the type of the P.P. generally dominated the Preterite also.

It will be noticed that many Verbs have forms with both a long and a short vowel in the Pret. in the Early Modern period, a condition which is inherited from M.E. Thus we have both *spack* and *spâke*, *bâd* and *bâde*, *sât* and *sâte*, &c. The explanation of this is simple. The short forms are in all these cases the normal developments of the O.E. forms—*sp(r)aec*, *bxd*, *sxl*, &c. In M.E. these forms were the only ones with a short vowel in the whole conjugation of each of these Verbs. It is perfectly natural, therefore, that some speakers should have extended the quantity of the Inf. and Pres. *spêken*, the Pret. Pl. *spêken*, and the P. P. *spêken*—*spêken* to the Pret. Sing., the solitary form which had a short vowel, pronouncing *spâk(e)* instead of *spâk*. Later, this new type *spâk(e)* was in its turn extended also to the Pret. Pl., so that *spêken* was eliminated and the distinction disappeared.

We see two distinct tendencies conflicting during the Modern period, namely, one to establish the type of the P. P. for the Pret. as well, and the other to eliminate the old P. P. type in favour of that of the Pret.

Those speakers who said *writ* in the Pret. exhibited the former tendency, while those who said *I have wrote* displayed the latter.

It has been pointed out that the old Pret. Pl. type rarely supersedes that of the Sing., unless the former be also that of the P. P., in which case it is assumed that it is the P. P. which is the basis of analogy, as the form more frequently used.

Thus the history of the Strong Verbs after the O.E. period is chiefly
concerned with transference of Verbs from one class to another, with the elimination of this or that type, and with the ultimate distribution in a given dialect of the various types between the Pret. and P. P.

Many old Strong Verbs have passed into the Weak conjugation, e.g. bake, sew, &c. We notice a tendency to transfer others, e.g. take, come, stand, which did not, however, become established in the Standard Spoken or in the Literary form of English.

The converse process of a Weak Verb becoming Strong is rarer, but we note strive—strive—striven on the analogy of thrive—thrive—thriven, &c. Hide—hid—hidden instead of O.E. hydd, M.E. hidde, is due to the influence of ride—rid—ridden. Here we note that hid was a perfectly normal Weak Pret. from hide, the vowel being shortened in M.E. before the double consonant. Rid, a common Preterite, instead of rode, is due to the influence of the P. P. Having got hide—hid, it was inevitable that the agreement with ride should be completed by the formation of hidden as a P. P.

We see, even from the comparatively few examples given below, that the usage of the best writers in the sixteenth and even in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, in regard to the Strong Verbs, does not by any means coincide exactly with our own. Even at the present time there is a certain fluctuation. Thus, while we have eliminated flang as the Pret. of fling, and prefer the P. P. type, sang, rang are still in very wide use, although many speakers say sung, rung, allowing the P. P. type to carry the day as in the case of flung. Great hesitation exists in the conjugation of wake. What is the current form of the P. P.? Some speakers habitually use waked, others woke, others woken.

Such forms as wrâte, drâve, strâke, which occur sometimes in Cl. i in the sixteenth century are certainly not of Northern origin as is supposed by some. Apart from the very common occurrence of forms with ā in other classes—e.g. sâte, bâre, spâke, &c., side by side with sat, &c., which probably encouraged the use of ā as a vowel associated with the Pret., wrâte, &c., would arise naturally by the side of wrât (with O.E. shortening) just as sâte and spâke arose by the side of sat, spak, and gâne by the side of gaf.

The analogy of bâde Pret. with a P. P. bidden may also have helped to form a Pret. wrâte, strâke, &c., in association with written, stricken, as also sate with a P. P. sitten.

It should be noted that the preservation or loss of -en in the P. P. is a matter of dialect originally. In M.E. the Southern dialects generally drop the -n, and Midland dialects retain it. Thus the variations between Verbs in this respect are the result of different competing Regional tendencies.


The Inf. and Pres. type of this Class shows no variation from the normal development of M.E. ī, and is invariably [ar]. It is therefore unnecessary to include examples.

Write.

Preterite. wrôte, &c. :—Pecok, wrote (Pl.); Shillingford, wrote, 8,
wrote, 61; Marg. Paston, wrot, i. 178, &c.; Latimer, wrote, 175. wrot, 175.

writ, &c.:—Euphues, writ, 304; Mrs. Eure, Verney Mem. ii. 87, rit (1642).

wrote:—Elyot, i. 131, 156, ii. 100.

Past Participle. writ(en), &c.:—Hoccleve, wryten; St. Editha, wryten, 33, y-wrylon, 9; Bokenam, wrylyn, Pr. Marg. 4; Gregory, wryynne, 61; Shillingford, wrylyn, 15; Gabr. Harvey, writ, Ltrs. 265; Euphues, written, 169; Mrs. Pulteney, V. Pprs. 222, rit (1639).

wrote, &c.:—Sir Edw. Howard, Ellis ii. i. 216 (1513); Lady Mary M. Wortley, 'all the verses were wrote by me'.

Write. Lady Sussex uses right as a Pret., V. Mem. iv. 88, 1642.

Smite.

Preterite. smote, smot:—Gregory, smote, 76; Cr. of Dk. of York Knt. of Bath, smot, 399.

Past Part. smyllyn, Machyn, 14.

smot, Gregory, 77; smetyn, Gregory, 106; smet, Bokenam, Kath. 898.

smot, Shakespeare, L. L. L., rhymes with not.


Abide. The normal Pret. Sing. abode occurs, St. Editha, 276, and. the Pl. abydyn, Bokenam, Crist. 673; Pecok has Sing. abode, and Pl. abiden, i. 20, aboden, i. 206; Marg. Paston, abedyn Pl., i. 111; Shillingford, abode Sing., 5; Latimer, abode, 188.

Past Participle. Marg. Paston, abiden, 41; also Fortescue, 135, and Shillingford, 41, and Skelton, Magnyfycence, 576; Marg. Paston has also abedyn, i. 81, also Short Engl. Chron. 130; Elyot has aboden, ii. 184.

Bite. The old Pret. bote survives in the fifteenth century, Gregory, 202; Caxton, Jason, 69. 14.

Ride. Pret. rod, Marg. Paston, i. 77; Shillingford, rode, 5; Gregory, roode, 89; rodde, Lord Berners, i. 114; Machyn, rod, rode, 4.

rid, &c.:—Cranmer, Ellis i. 2. 37; Thos. Wilson, 140; Machyn also has red, 167.

Strike.

Inf., &c. By the side of strike, strick is also found:—Euphues, to strick, 239.

Preterite. stroke:—Cr. of Knt. of Bath, stroke, 400; Latimer, 94; Euphues, 251.

strake: strack:—Cr. of Knt. of Bath, strakke, 399, 400 (twice); Lord Berners, strake, i. 114, 140; J. Mason, strake, Ellis ii. 2. 59; Cavendish, L. of Wolsey, strak, 83.

streke:—St. Editha, 3739.

struck:—Machyn, 85.

Past Participle. stricken, &c.:—Machyn, sryken, 63; Euphues, stricken, 152, striken, 299.
NOTES ON INFLEXIONS

strooken, &c.:—Thos. Wilson, stroken, 132; Sir T. Smith, stroken, Republ. 36; Euphues, strooke, 57, stroken, 162, 230.

strucken:—Honourable J. Dillon (of a ship), 'She had her bottome strucken out', Verney Pprs. 149.

Class II. O.E. ēō, ēā, u, 0; M.E. ē, u (= [y]), ĕ, u, 0.

Choose. The Present and Inf. forms appear in three types—(1) chese (with M.E. ē'), which is characteristic of South-East and E. Midland; (2) ō (M.E. ō') from a form with shifting of stress from the first to the second element of the diphthong, and the loss of the former:—ēō— ēō—ō; (3) ū = [y], which is a characteristic W. Midland and South-West treatment of ēō in M.E. Types (2) and (3) have no difference in pronunciation from the moment that [y] has become [ū] (cf. p. 246), but the spelling with ū probably indicates a late survival of (3). On the other hand, ū may be written occasionally for type (2), according to the habit of writing ū for O.E. ō. See pp. 234, &c. This is probably the explanation of the chuse spelling in writers who would hardly make use of type (3).

(1) Inf. and Pres., to chees, chese, &c., occur in Pallad. 4. 84, 99. 1059, &c.; M. Paston, ii. 292, I ches; Pecok, chese Subj., i. 112; Gregory, 230, Inf.; Caxton, Jason, for to chese, 57. 32; Elyot, 51, chesing; Lord Berners, i. 53.

(2) chose, choose, Lord Berners, i. 58; Latimer, Sev. Serm. 25; Ascham, Toxoph. 39; Euphues, choose, 139.

(3) chuse, &c., Pallad. 5. 123, Imperat.; Lord Berners, i. 389; Machyn, chuysse, 17, chusesse, 141; Thos. Wilson, A. of Rhet. 56; Euph. chuse Imperat., 229; Lady Rochester, Verney Mem. iii. 467 (1660).

The Preterite. The M.E. chees, ches, &c., with ē' [ē] from O.E. ēā, is gradually replaced by a form with ō', formed on the analogy of the P. P. chōsen. This is the ancestor of the present form. The older form survives far into the fifteenth century, after which the ō form is most common. The occasional chōse must be explained by association with Vbs. of the bear class—Pret. bäre, P. P. bören.

chees, &c., Hoccleve; St. Editha, chesen (Pl), 274; Gregory, chesse Pl., 190; Fortescue, chese, 112, 113.

chose, &c., Pecok, i. 183; Gregory, chosse, 95, they chosyne, 96; Caxton, Jason, 94. 32; Lever, Serm. 35.

chāse, Pecok, chas, ii. 349, chaas, ii. ibid.; Elyot, i. 214.

Past Participle. St. Editha still retains the old form y-core, 789, by the side of y-chose, 2207. There is no variety as regards the vowel, except that it occasionally appears to be short, as the following consonant is doubled, e.g. chosse, Gregory, 95; chosser, Machyn, 22; otherwise the only point of note is that, as in other Strong Vbs., the forms in -e alternate with those in -en:—-e occurs, Pecok, i. 111; Gregory, 71, 95; Lady Rochester, choose, V. Mem. iii. 467, 1660. Most writers, so far as my material goes, use the -en (-yn) type.

O.E. geōtan—geā—gōton—gōten 'pour'.

This obsolete Vb. is still traceable in the word ingot, where got is
LOSE, ETC.; FIND, ETC. 347

derived from the P. P. Elyot preserves the fuller form of the P. P. in yoten, i. 48.

Lose. This Vb. had, originally, exactly the same vowel sequence as choose. It is conjugated as a Weak Vb. from early in the Modern period, the survivals of the old Strong Pret. and P. P. being rare. The latter survives as an Adjective in the compound forlorn.

Inf. and Pres. lese, &c., Pallad. 35. 248; Marg. Paston, i. 109, ii. 309, &c.; Fortescue, 118, lessynghe Pres. Part., 138; Elyot, 34, lese; Lord Berners, leese, i. 28; Ascham, lease, Tox. 117, leese, ibid. 128, 158 (Subj.), leeseth, Tox. 158; Euphues, 193.

The other type appears as loose, 305.

Shoot. O.E. sêotan—sêat—scuton—scoten still retains the form with e, comparable to chêse, lêse, in the fifteenth century, and is found in Marg. Paston—schete, i. 83, shet, i. 82. This lady also writes schote, i. 83. Gregory has schote, which may be a phonetic spelling for the ô type, as is most probable.

Gregory has a Weak Pret. schot, 204, and a P. P. scholtyne, 58.

Float. O.E. fleotan, &c.; Bl. of Quint. has flêth 3rd Pres. Sing.

Freeze. Milton in Trin. Coll. MS. writes wherewith she freez'd her foes to congeal'd stone. Comus 449. This, with the strange Weak Pret., is corrected from the original, which ran: freezind wherewith, &c., a very archaic form of Pres. Part. The old P.P. frore is used, P. L. ii, 595.

CLASS III.

O.E. singan—sang—sungen. Verbs of this Class have, on the whole, preserved three original types, though no longer distinguishing between Sing. and Pl. in the Pret. Begin, spin, spring, swim, drink, &c.

It is possible that begin, &c., besides began, in Pret. had also forms with a long vowel, on the analogy of Class IV—cf. begane, Pecok, Machyn, &c., swane, Lord Berners, by the side of swanne, Elyot, ii. 169.

In some Verbs of this Class the P. P. type penetrates to the Pret., and just as we now often have rung, swum, &c. in the Pret., we find wonne, Euphues, 'won', 273, by the side of the then usual wan or wanne, which occurs very generally not only in Euphues itself, but also before, in Short Engl. Chron., wanne, 61, Gregory, 58, 71, Caxton, Jason, ii. 3, Lord Berners, Machyn, &c.

Lord Berners, i. 371, and Euphues, 88, both have flang where we now have flung, but Euphues already has stung, 68.

In the Vb. find the old distinction between Sing. and Pl. Pret.—O.E. fänd, M.E. fônd; O.E. fûndon, M.E. founden—is preserved far into the fifteenth century. Pecok has Sing. fônde, i. 101, Pl. founden, by the side of fôden, i. 242: Shillingford has fônde, 61, founde, 65. In the P. P., forms with or without -n occur throughout the fifteenth century—e. g. Gregory, founde, foundyn; Caxton, founden; Fortescue, founde; M. Paston, found, found; Pecok and Ord. of Worcester, founde. Elyot has founde, i. 215, founden, 26, &c., &c. Run, in Inf., is a new formation; the ordinary M.E. type in Inf. and Pres. is renne, which is perhaps of Scand. origin. This persists as the more usual form throughout the fifteenth century and into the next century, and is found in Pallad., St. Editha, Bokenam, Pecok, Bl. of Quint., Fortescue, Cr. Knt. of Bath, and Cath. of Ar., the last but one having also rynnynge in Pres. Part. Lord Berners has rynne and ryn, and further, ronne (= runne), i. 163 and 358,
and *ronnyng*, i. 163. *Roon* is found in a letter of Sir Edw. Howard, Ellis ii. 1. 217, *to runne*, Ascham, *Tox.* 46, *ronne*, ibid. 103, but *rin* still occurs, Scholem. 54. Euphues has, apparently, only the *runne* type.

**Come.** O.E. *cuman*—*cöm*—*cam*—*cōmν*—*cāmön*—*cumen*.

Various types spring from the above. ↑

**Pret.** St. Editha has *cōme* and *becōme*, 25, Sing. 65, Pl. *cōmen*, 58; Pecok, *cāmen*, *cāme*; Gregory has Pret. Pl. *cum*, 91, and a Pret. Sing. *come*, apparently = [küm] from the *cōmen* type; also *cam*, 91, a survival of old *cam*; Caxton has *becam*, 4. 24 Sing., and *cam*, 94. 32. Dr. Knight has *cam*, 196, and so has Sir T. Smith, Ellis ii. 3. 16. The P. P. is generally written *come*, which may represent either [kūm] or [kūm].

That the O. and M. E. P. P. *cumen* survives is shown by the occasional spelling *comme*, &c. Gabriel Harvey had a new formation, *overcomd*, p. 3, as a P. P., and *overcomed* occurs in the Te Deum in Edward VI’s First and Second Prayer Books, and Shakespeare has *mischecom’d*, L. L. L. Pecok has *come*, Gregory, *ouyrcome*, 125, Machyn, *over-cum*, 70. Caxton has *comen* (Jason), and so has Elyot, i. 144. Laneham’s Lrr. (1575), *cummen* 33.

**Climb.** O.E. *climban*—*clāmb*—*clāmbon*—*clumben*; M.E. *climb*—*clōm*—*clūmb*.

The Pret. *—clāme* survives in Ascham, *Tox.* 76. The vowel is from an O.E. and M.E. unlengthened form *clāmb*, with later lengthening on the analogy of the other tenses.

Hoccleve has the P. P. *clumben*, and Bokenam, *clomben*, Ann. 646.

**Yield** has a Pret. Pl. *yelde* in Gregory, 83, which apparently comes from the Late O.E. (Sthn.) *gxtld*, M.E. *yeld*, type of the Singular, extended to Pl. also.


**Help.** Caxton, Jason 102. 26, still has the old Pret. *halp*, also *helpe*, 76. 1, perhaps from O.E. South and South-East *healp*, M.E. *help*. A Pret. *holpe* is found in Robt. the Devil, 960, and in Shakespeare’s Hen. IV, Pt. 1, i. ii.; and *hop* Verney Mem. iii. 274 (1656). This is derived from the P.P. type.

The P. P. *holpe(n)* in M.E. is found without -n in Pecok, i. 284, with -en, &c., in Pallad., Gregory (*holpyn*), 207, Cr. Knt. of Bath, 400, Elyot, 117, Ascham, *Tox.* 43, &c., &c.

**Fight.** O.E. *feohtan* (feht-, fht-)—*feah*—*fuhton*—*fohten*; M.E. *fihten*—*fahl*—*fauht*; *fuhten* and *foughten*; *foughten*.

The Pret. *faughile* (M.E. Singular type) survives, Gregory, 82, &c.; Caxton, Jason 66. 33; Short Engl. Chron. 68; Elyot, 179; the other type, *fough*, from the P. P., also occurs in Gregory and afterwards.

The P. P. retains the -en suffix in Ascham’s *foughten*, *Tox.* 64.

**Class IV.**

**Knead.** The Strong P. P. *knōden* is preserved, Lever’s Sermons, 46—*knoden into dough*. 
Break. O.E. brecan—brœc—brœcon—brocen; M.E. brêken, brâk, and brâk(e)—brêke and brôke—brôken.

Preterite. During the whole of the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries brâke is the most frequent type, and, occasionally, brâk. St. Editha, Pecok, Gregory, Cr. Knt. of Bath, Lord Berners, Latimer, Euphues, &c., all have brâke. St. Editha still distinguishes the PL brikon, 4410, from the Sing. type, and Gregory uses this type in the Sing., 202. broke comes from the P. P. type. It is found already in Cr. Knt. of Bath, 395.

Past Participle. The vowel is practically invariable from the M.E. period onwards, being always the lengthened ə. There is, however, a form brâke, on the analogy of the Pret., found in Verney Mem. iv, used both by Sir R. Verney, p. 134 (1665), and Dr. Denton, p. 223 (1676). There is the usual fluctuation during the M.E. and Modern periods between the forms broke—broken.

Speak, which originally belonged to Class V (O.E. sprecan—sprœc—sprœcon—sprecen), has passed completely into that of break, and is best considered under this Class. Its forms are identical with those of break.

The Pret. has both long and short forms as in M.E. St. Editha has Sing. spâke and a PL spêke, 287, which doubtless preserves the original PL type. The latter is rare, however, after the M.E. period. Spâke is the usual type well into the seventeenth century. The type with a short vowel, however, is also used by Pecok, spak, Caxton, spack, Jason 64. 30, Latimer, 115, and many others. The Rev. Mr. Aris uses speake as a Pret., Verney Mem. iii. 136, 1655.

Past Participle. Spoke, spoken seem to be equally common down to and during the eighteenth century. Sir J. Burgoyne has spok, V. Mem. ii. 217, 1642. Lord Chesterfield, writing in No. 100 of the World, 1754 (on Johnson’s Dictionary before it appeared), speaks of English as being ‘studied as a learned language, though as yet but little spoke’ in France and Italy.

Marg. Paston still uses the archaic spêke, i. 77 (1449).

Bear and steal have pretty much the same history as the other Vbs. of this Class, bâre and stale long being the common form of the Pret. Cr. of Knt. of Bath has bêre (Pret. Sing. and PL, 391, 389), which may be a phonetic spelling for bâre, or correspond to the old PL type. Bokenam has Pret. PL bêre. Stale occurs throughout the fifteenth century and in Cavendish, L. of Wolsey, 92.

Class V.

Give. O.E. ȝiefan, ȝeaf, ȝeafon—giefen (W. Sax.); Non-W. Sax.:- ȝefan, ȝeofan; ȝez, ȝef, ȝefon; ȝefen, ȝeofen.

These forms give rise to correspondingly various types in M.E. and Modern English.

The initial sound was an open consonant in O.E., and in M.E. is expressed by ȝ- or ȝ-. By the side of these, forms with g-, expressing a stop consonant, are common in M.E., which are probably due to Scandinavian influence. There is also an alternation between ȝ and ȝ in the vowel of the Inf. and Pres. Indic. The former may be of Scandinavian
origin, when the initial consonant is g, otherwise it must be derived from the Saxon type, or formed by analogy from the 2nd and 3rd Pers. Pres. The gee forms are to be explained according to the statement on pp. 207-8.

Inf. and Pres. type. (1) yeve, geue, &c.:—St. Editha 958, 1409, &c.; Pallad. (Imperat.) 19. 508; Bokenam, Marg. 1053, Eliz. 930 (yewth); Pecok, geueth, ii, yeuern (Pl.), passim; Godstow Reg., w. forzewe, 6; Marg. Paston, yeve, i. 268, to zef, i. 109, zeue, i. 67, zeuyn, i. 69; Shillingford, yeve, 27, yeveth, 29, &c.; Fortescue, 153, &c.

(2) geve, &c.:—Pallad. Pr. 24. 656; Bokenam, Pr. Marg. 232 and 411; Pecok, passim; Marg. Paston, geue, ii. 218; Gregory, to forgevyn, 99; Shillingford, geue Inf., 20; Sir Thos. More, Ellis i. 213, Inf., and geueth, i. 200; Latimer, to geue, Ploughers 35, and Seven Serm. 22, geuynge, Ploughers 24; Edw. VI's First and Second Prayer Bks., geue, passim; Ascham, geue, Scholem. 115, 134, geueth, Tox. 39, 145; Cavendish, L. of Wolsey, 96, &c.; Gabriel Harvey, gef (= gev?), 48; Q. Elizabeth, Lttrs. to J. VI, 2; Mrs. Basire, geuing, Corresp. 140 (1655).

(3) give, yive:—Pecok; Bokenam, Imperat. yive, Marg. 1123.

(4) give, gyve, &c.:—Caxton, Jason 13. 2; Fortescue, gyf Inf., 129, givith, 139, give Pl., ibid.; Lord Berners, i. 22; Latimer, gyue, Ploughers 25, Ascham, gyueth, Tox. 28; Machyn, gyfe, gyf Subj.; Euphues, give, 163, giues, 88, to forgiue, 90; Thos. Wilson (always); Q. Elizabeth, gyve, give (usual type).

Preterite.

Type (1). yaf, &c.:—St. Editha, zaffe, 81; Bokenam, yaf, Pr. Marg. 156, bou youe, Marg. 507, Pl. youe(n), Agn. 441, Ann. 254; Shillingford, yaf, 14; Marg. Paston, yaffe, ii. 215.

(2) gaf, &c.:—Wm. Paston, gef, i. 25 (gaf with e written for [æ]); Gregory, gaffe, 174; Caxton, Jason 12. 23, gaf.


Sir Thos. Smith refers to both yaf and yave as antiquated.

(4) gave:—Gregory, 58; Caxton, Jason 3. 5; Bp. Knight, 204 (1512); Lord Berners; Ascham, Tox. 31; Latimer, gaue, Seven Serm., 36, forgaue, ibid. 57; Machyn, gyff, 3 (ay = a, i.e. [æ] or [e]?) ; Euphues, gaue, passim, forgaue, 175.

Past Participle.

(1) yeve(n):—Hen. V, Letter in Lttrs. of Marg. of Anjou (1421); St. Editha, zeue, 499, y-yeue, 750; Pecok, zeue; Shillingford, 131; Lord Lovel's Will, yeven, L. D. D. 75. 27; Fortescue, yeuen, 152; Barlings Abbey Agreement, L. D. D. 135. 5; y yeven, Cely Pprs. 4; Oseney Reg., i3e, 6; Bury Wills, yeuen (1480).

(2) yoeve(n):—Bokenam, youe, Ann. 329; Pecok; Marg. Paston, zoyyn, i. 112; Godstow Reg., youven; Gregory, yoyyn, 126; Sustr. Men., zowyn, 96. 32; Irish Docs., Lttrs. and Pprs. i. 379, youen; also Bury Wills 77 (1492); youe, ibid. 77; Q. Elizabeth, youen, Argyle Lttrs. 32 (1595).

(3) gëve(n):—M. Paston, i. 112; Gregory, i-geve, 64, geve, 96, gevyn,
96, 118; Fortescue, geuen, 136, 150, geve, 155; Bury Wills, gevyn, 82 (1595); Cr. Knt. of Bath, geuen, 393, 398; Sir R. Wingfield, Ellis ii. i. 212, gevyn; Edw. VI's First and Second Prayer Bks.; Latimer, geven, Ploughers 20; Ascham, Tox. 13, 18, Scholem. 59, 134; Q. Elizabeth, Ltrs. 2; Mall Verney, V. Mem. ii. 214, forgiven (1655); Lady Wentworth, gevyn, W. Pprs. 40 (1705), 56 (1706), 64 (1708).

(4) give(n), &c.—giffen, Will of Lord Lovel, L. D. D. 86. 6 (1455); Caxton, Jason, giue, 70. 9, gyuen, 68. 18; Elyot, giue, i. 215; Lord Berners, gyven, i. 171, &c., forgiven, i. 66; Cranmer, Ellis i. 2. 40; Ascham, gyven, Tox. 19 (twice), 27; also giuen, which greatly preponderates over geuen; Machyn, gyffyn, 17; Euphues, giuen; Q. Elizabeth, Ltrs. to J. VI, 13; after the end of the sixteenth century, while geuen, &c., occurs, given is the predominant type.

(5) A type gövyn is found occasionally, but I have only noted one example—from Gregory, 200. Bury Wills, 80, have a variant of this—gwovyn (1501). (6) Geen, Lancham's Ltr. 41.

In quite recent times the type gave was used as a P. P., though probably never by the best speakers. Thus, Miss Austen, in Sense and Sensibility, chap. 24, makes Miss Lucy Steele write 'he has never gave me a moment's alarm', and 'it would have gave me such pleasure to meet you there'.

Bid and forbid. This Verb is derived from a blending of two O.E. Verbs, biddan—bæd, bædon, beden 'pray', and bædan—bæd—budon—boden 'order', 'command', &c. The Pret. bade, pronounced both as [baed], from the M.E. Singular type bad, and [beid] from a M.E. bad, with lengthening on the analogy of the Pl. bæden, and the P. P. bæden, are easy to explain. The present-day P. P. found already in Late M.E. and becoming more frequent in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries is more difficult. The only P. P.'s which agree with bidden are written, ridden, &c., of Class I. But it is not easy to see a point of association which can have led to the borrowing of a P. P. from this class by bid, unless it be the rarish wrate, &c.

Pres. and Inf. type. (1) bide, biddeth, Pecok; Euphues, forbiddeth.
(2) bide, forbiddeth, Pres. Subj., forbode, Pecok; Elyot, God forbode, ii. 141; Euphues, bad Inf. (variant of bid).

The e forms are from O.E. bædan. From this Verb also comes St. Editha's bude, 1520.

Preterite. (1) bade:—Pecok, forbàde, i. 279; Marg. Paston, je bædye, i. 69; Shillingford, bade (Sing.), 7.
(2) bád:—M. Paston, je bad, i. 77; Euphues; the last-mentioned source has also a Pret. bidde, 105.

Past Participle. (1) bæde, Pecok, i. 7; Shillingford, ybede, 7.
(2) bøden:—Pecok, forbode, i. 144, 145, forboden, i. 207; Shillingford, forbode, 44; Elyot, forboden, ii. 334. (3) Euphues has forbidden, 61.

Get. O.E. gietan (non-W. Sax. -gelan) is only used compounded—for-, be-, on-, giel.

The parts are Pret. Sing. -geat (non-W. Sax. -gæt and -gel); Pret. Pl. -gielton (non-W. Sax. -gæton); P. P. -gielten (non-W. Sax. -gelten, -gelten).
The use of this Verb uncompounded, and the stop g- instead of y- in the initial, are both the result of Scandinavian influence. The gol-forms are the result of confusion with Verbs of the break class, which always had -o- in the P. P. The gol-forms began in the P. P. and passed by the so-called 'Western' system of analogy into the Pret.

Infinitive Present.

(1) yête, &c. This type appears to be rare in the Modern period in the uncompounded forms, but St. Editha has for-jetone, 2167, Pres. Pl.; Pecok, forgele, Shillingford, forgele Imperat., 59.

(2) gote:—Pallad., gête (rhymes sweete), 14. 371; Bokenam, forgete, Marg. 464; Shillingford, gete Inf., 46; Marg. Paston, gelte, ii. 239, gelte, i. 48, gellyn, ii. 132, lo yete, ii. 179 (all Inf.); Lord Berners, getle, i. 29.

Preterite.

(1) yat:—St. Editha, for-jat, 453.

(2) gat:—St. Editha, gate, 856; Gregory, galte; Lord Berners, gatte, i. 32; Latimer, gat, 179; Thos. Wilson, forgat, 49; Ascham, gatte, Scholem. 31.

(3) gate:—Pecok, Fortescue, gate, 149; Caxton, Jason 7. 21; Elyot, 180, forgate, ii. 139; Sir Thos. More, forgate, Ellis i. 213; Latimer, gate, 57; Lancham’s Ltrr. (1575), 42.

(4) got:—Thos. Wilson, begot, 81.

(5) gotte:—Bokenam, begotyn, Crist. 676; Latimer, Seven Serm. 28.

A Pret. Pl. gelon is found in Pecok, which is probably the lineal descendant of O.E. (non-W. Sax.) gelon.

Past Participle.

(1) yête(n):—St. Editha, yzete, 2744.

(2) gete(n):—Pecok, geten; Fortescue, geten, 143.

(3) goten:—It is not quite certain whether forms spelt with one t are in all cases long, but since it is said to be established by rhymes that the long type existed, and since this is the normal development of the vowel in an open syllable, I assume length unless the following consonant is doubled. Caxton, Jason, goten, 8. 26; Fortescue, gote, 143, golten, 136, gotyn, 154; Gregory, gotyn, 134, begotyn, 70; Bp. Knight, forgotyn, 201.

(4) gotte(n):—Elyot, golten, 27; Lord Berners, i. 285, golte; Machyn, golten, 52, be-golten, 23; Ascham, golten, Tox. 32; Latimer, 50, 78, &c.; Lever, Sermons, 32; Gabriel Harvey, golten, Ltrs. 17; Thos. Wilson, golten, 202.

golten is used by Lady Arabella in Vanbrugh’s Journey to London, ii. i, P. 345.

The American use of the suffix -en in the uncompounded form goes back to the current English of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.


The M.E. Pres. and Inf. type with g (=[dʒ]) survives in Pecok, who has legghith, i. 29, liggen Pres. Pl., Pres. Part. ligging.

The P. P. lyen, &c., is used during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries,
and occasionally in the seventeenth century:—Bokenam, lyne, Christ, 685; Cely Papers, lyne, 47; lyen, Elyot, i. 150; Cavendish, L. of Wolsey, 123; Creighton, Bp. of Bath and Wells, Verney Mem. iii. 92, 1670.

(M.E.) Mēte 'measure'. O.E. metan—met—mēton—meten.
The P. P. of this old Verb, meten, occurs in Euphues, 92.

Sit. O.E. sittan—sæt—sælon—seten.

Preterite. During the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries both sate and sat are in frequent use. sate occurs in Gregory, 112, Short Engl. Chron. 53 (three times), Elyot ii. 157, Euphues, 52.
sate, &c., Gregory, 112, Cr. Knt. of Bath, 389, sat; Latimer, satt, 174,
Machyn, sat, 43.

Euphues has also set, which is capable of more than one explanation. Lady Verney uses sate, V. Mem. ii. 306 (1647).


See. O.E. seoh—seah (and seah)—sōwan—sēven. The M.E. Pret. forms are—Angl. saugh, and its variant, saw, from the seah type, seih from a Southern seh type. There is also a form si and sīh, from the PL seh, sēh, formed on the analogy of Angl. Pl. sāgon. The old P. P. is generally abandoned in favour of a new form sēn from the O.E. Adj. gesēn, non-W. Sax. gesēn 'visible'.

The early Modern reflects the variety of forms found ii, M.E.

Preterite. St. Editha has, in Sing.:—seyje, 1016, saye, 823, sye, 907, sey, 2521, yse, 3153, sawe, 220, saw, 2112; in Pl.—seyje, 460, seyen, 2573. Bokenam has, in Sing.—sey, Marg. 1130, sawe, Magd. 1010, saw, Christ. 240; in Pl.—seyn, Pr. Magd. 345, seyn, Agn. 81. Marg. Paston has sey (Pl.), i. 113; Pecok, thei sien, i. 187, sawen, i. 246; Shillingford, sigh, 10, sawe, 67 (both Sing.) ; Cely Papers sometimes has se; Gregory, sawe, 110 (Sing.), say, 222 (Pl.); Cr. Knt. of Bath, saww, 394 (Sing.); Bp. Fox of Winchester writes see, Ellis ii. 2. 5, s. 1520; Machyn, say, and often see Sing., saw Pl.; Aubrey has I see, i. 115. Lady Wentworth often writes see, especially in the phrase as ever I see, p. 57, &c.

Past Participle. St. Editha, sene, 473, syeze, 1502, sey, 2436, y-sye, 2440; Bokenam, selyn, Magd. 1058; Pecok, seen; Shillingford, selyn, 4, say, 13; Magd. Paston, sene, ii. 82; Cr. Knt. of Bath, sien, 390, seen, 394.

CLASS VI.

The old P. P. bake survives in Pecok, i. 67, Gregory, 141, and in Bp. Knight, 202. The latter writer has 'the bisket is almost bake' = the matter is nearly ripe.

Stand. O.E. standan—stōd—stōdon—standen. The old P. P. stande, &c., is used throughout the fifteenth century. A Weak form, especially in the compound understan-led, is much in vogue in the sixteenth century, e.g. in the First Prayer Book, Preface. The Second Prayer Book has understan.
Take. By the side of the universally used forms *take, taken, -yn*, in the P. P., Palladius has *taked*, used as a passive with an Auxiliary, 83. 630.

Lade. The P. P. *lade* occurs in Gregory, 175; *ouerloaden*, Wilson, 66, and *loaden* in Verney Mem. ii. 224, 1645, in a letter from Sir H. P. Newton.

Forsake. Sir T. Smith has Pret. *forsakid* in a letter, Ellis ii. 3. 10.

Laugh. O. E. *hlæhan*—*hlög*—*hlögon*.


The P. P. of *draw* is *drane*, Machyn 4 (cf. p. 142); the normal is *drawen, &c.*, cf. Gregory, *drawe*, 58, *drawyn*, 186. Gregory has also a Weak form *drawyd*, 172.

CLASS VII.

THE SO-CALLED REDUPLICATING VERBS.

Beat. O. E. *bealan—beot—beolen—beaten*.

The Early Modern forms of Pres. and Pret. must have been [bet—bët; bët] respectively.

The difference does not appear to be indicated by the spelling. Latimer has a Pret. *bet*, which may represent an early shortening from M. E. *bët*. This would correspond to the present-day popular and dialectal *bet*. The latter could also be explained on the analogy of *meet—met, &c.*

Fall. O. E. *feallan—fëoll—fëollon—fallen*.

The very common M. E. *fell, &c.*, which has not been satisfactorily explained, persists at least as late as the sixteenth century;—Hoccleve has *fille*; Shillingford, *fyll*, 19; Pecok, *fyll, fille, befill*; Caxton, *fylle*, Jason, ii. 8, *fyll*, 99. 24; also Lord Berners, *fille*, i. 336, 398; and Cavendish, 6.

On the other hand, Bokenam has *fel, hefel*, St. Editha, *felle*, 239, *fel*, 258. Lord Berners's usual form is *felle*, the normal development of O. E. *fëoll*, of which *fell* is the shortened form. Lady Brill. Harley also has *feel* (1641), p. 119.

Hold. Comparable to *fell from fëoll*, we find *hild* or *hyld* from *höld*, Shillingford, 20; Gregory, 69, *179, hyld*; *Cr. Knt. of Bath*, 389; Cavendish, 89. *Lady Brill. Harley writes heeld* (1638), p. 12. Cf. Milton's rhyme *shield-withheld*, and Spenser's *beheld* with *seeld 'seldom'. This and *feel* above are survivals of M. E. *fël, höld*. 
Shillingford has also held, 5, and Gregory, helde, 78; Lord Berners, held, i. 366, &c.; Marg. Paston has huld, ii. 191, a remarkable form to find in an Eastern dialect.

It is not surprising to find hulte in St. Editha, 852, &c., by the side of held, 3206.

The P. P. is iholde, Godstow Reg.; hald, Marg. Paston; holde, 77, hold, 99, holden, 120, Shillingford; Euphues has helde, 304.

Hew. Robert the Devil has hue (and slew), 922, the descendant of M.E. heu (cf. p. 242, on the spelling).

The P. P. in -en is normal in Early Modern hewen, Marg. Paston, ii. 251; Euphues, 111, &c., &c.

Know, blow, grow have quite regularly knew, grew, blew, &c., with variants knyw, blue, &c. Shillingford has a Weak Pret. knawed, 10 and 27.

The Pret. shewe from show, an old Weak Verb, occurs, Cavendish, L. of Wolsey, 185, doubtless on the analogy of this group. Euphues has the Strong P. P. shouen, 202, 280, also shewn, 280.

CLASS VIII.

Auxiliaries.

Be. The main points to be considered are the forms of the 3rd Pers. Pres. Indic. and of the Pl. Pres.

As regards the former, the old Southern form bith, &c., occurs here and there in the fifteenth century.

Shillingford has bith, Marg. Paston, beth (and is), but Pecok and Fortescue, is. This, indeed, is the usual form. The Pl. shows more variety, and the present-day are, derived from the E. Midlands, and ultimately from the North, comes only gradually into general use in London and the South.

The Southern Pl. bith, &c., was widely used in the fifteenth century, by the side of the Midland bin, been, or be.

The E. Midland texts of M.E. generally have arn, sometimes by the side of ben—thus, Genesis and Exodus (arn and ben), R. of Brunne (are, ben, and even bep), Norf. Guilds (arn); in the fifteenth century Bokenam has arn, ern. William Paston, arn, Marg. Paston, arn, ar, ben, Lydgate, arn, Gregory, ar and bene. These writers are all from the E. Midlands, Bokenam definitely claiming to write the Suffolk speech, the others showing in many ways traces of their native dialect. In the letters of Q. Marg. of Anjou there is one from the Treasurer of Calais, who writes er, 16, other officers write we aren, by the side of beeth, and Henry V, in a letter of 1421, writes ar, p. 18. Other texts, with no very pronounced dialectal character, vary more or less. Short Engl. Chron. has bethe, Rewie Sustr. Men., been, Caxton, ben, but also ye ar (Jason), Cr. Dk. of York, be, been, Bk. of Quint., ben, Irish Documents in Letters and Papers, vol. i, ben. Shillingford has, by the side of occasional ben, the archaic buth, and also beth, Ord. of Worcester, ben, Godstow Register,byn, ben, Oseney Reg., been.
Early in the following century, a letter from Sir J. Wingfield, Ellis ii. 1 (1513) has be, while Bp. Knight (afterwards of Bath and Wells) (1512) has bet(e) and be. Lord Berners has ben and are, arre, ar. The Will of R. Bradley (Leics., 1533) still has ben, L. D. D. 162. I. Bp. Latimer, be, bee commonly, rarely are, Machyn, ar, Ascham, be, often in Tox., while are occurs somewhat infrequently in Scholem.; Wilson, Arte of Rhet., has both are and ben frequently, Euphues, are and be, Q. Elizabeth, ar and be.

With the negative, be was used late into the seventeenth century by good speakers; thus Col. Courtly, in Vanbrugh's Journey to London, says if it ben't too long. Otherwise, are seems the universal form of the Pl. in the seventeenth century in good, colloquial English. I have noted no be forms in the Verney Letters.

Confusion in use of is—are; was—were.

A tendency to extend the use of is to sentences in which there was a Pl. subject is traceable in the sixteenth century and continues among educated people well into the eighteenth century. The -s- Plurals of other verbs, referred to p. 340, may have been fostered partly by this habit. At the present time is with a Pl. subject is heard only among the uneducated.

Sir Thomas Elyot writes both body and soul is deformed, Gouern. ii. 340; Sir Thos. Smith—there is three wayes, Rep. Angl. 64; Mrs. Isham, Verney Mem. iii—moste of our genrte is secured and took to Oxford, 233, 1655; Sir Ed. Sydenham, ibid. ii—all hopes of peace is now taken away; Edm. V.—your delayes is out of your goodness, V. Mem. ii. 132, 143; Sir R. Verney—my Cough and Cold is badd enough God helpe me, iv. 326, 1685; Lady Strafford, Wentworth Pprs. 262—Lord Marsam and Lord Bathurst is named; Lord Bute, Wentw. Pprs.—when there is great folks, fine words, &c.

The construction you was was apparently much more common, and there are indications of a more general tendency to extend the use of was to the 3rd Pers. Pl. also.

Pope, in a letter to Lady Mary Montagu Wortley, dated Sept. 1, 1718, writes I shall look upon you as so many years younger than you was: Lady Wentworth has you was, pp. 94, 118; Vermilla, in Fielding's Love in several Masques, says—pray, Sir, how was you cured of your love, Act iv, Sc. ii. The habit was apparently passing into disrepute at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Miss Austen puts the construction several times into the mouth of the rather vulgar Miss Lucy Steele in Sense and Sensibility—I felt almost as if you was an old acquaintance, vol. i, chap. 22; I felt sure you was angry with me, chap. 24; if you was to say to me, &c., chap. 24. The better-bred personages in this and others of Miss Austen's books do not use this phrase.

I have noted a few examples of was with the 3rd Pers. Pls. Sir Thos. Seymour, 1544, such sowders and maryners as was shept at Harwyche, St. Pprs. Hen. VIII, i, p. 781; Cavendish, L. of Wolsey, the wells whiche was, 80; Nancy Nicholas, in Verney Mem., has ye seconds (in a duel) was, iv. 230, 1683; Lady Sussex, we was glade; in Wentw.
Pprs.—*they was*, 124, 1642; *The Duke of Kent and Lord Longville was*, 300 (Peter W.).

In *Euripides* appears the strange but quite explicable construction *art not you*, p. 180, where *you*, being used to a single person, takes the Singular form of the Verb. This is also the explanation of *you was*, though, as *they was* shows, there was a tendency to generalize this form of the Verb for both numbers.

**The Vowel of Present-day are.**

The M.E. *āre(n)* had undoubtedly originally a long vowel in stressed positions, as can be shown by rhymes. M.E. *āre* would result in present-day [æə], cf. M.E. *bāre*, which has become [beə], and *hāre*, which has become [heə]. This form was still in vulgar use down to the first half of the nineteenth century, as is seen from the spelling *air* in *Dickens* and other writers of his period. The ancestral form of this, from M.E. *āre* can also be proved by rhymes and spellings to have been in use at a much earlier date. Rede me, &c., rhymes *are*—*care*, Donne rhymes *are*—*faire*, *Heroical Epistle*, 21–2, with *aire*, *ibid.* 41–2, pp. 124–5; Mrs. Isham, in *Verney Mem.* iii, writes, *you air low discrale*, p. 235, 1655, and Mrs. Sherrard writes *aier*, *V. Mem.* iii, 256, 1655; Cooper mentions *are, air, heir, ere* as all having the same sound.

This form is the basis of the negative *ain’t* [eint], formerly written *an’t*.

The present-day pronunciation of *are* [ə] when stressed, [ə] in unstressed positions, is derived from the M.E. unstressed form *ār(e).* This became [ər] when M.E. *ā* was fronted (p. 196, &c., above) and was used both in Strong and Weak positions. In the former position the vowel underwent lengthening before -r, and the Early Modern combination [ər] was retracted subsequently to [ã(r)], cf. pp. 203–5, above.

This old Weak form, used in a stressed position, is seen in various rhymes in the sixteenth century and later, e.g. *are*—*warre*, *Habington’s Castara*, 49; *farre*—*are*, Donne’s *Progr. of the Soul*, First Aniv. 7–8.

Thus, it is evident that for a long time both types were in use, until one was finally eliminated in good usage.

**Shall.** The original difference in the vowels of the Sing. and Pl. of the Pres., which is found in Old and Middle English (*schal*—*schullen*) is preserved in texts from all sources down to the third quarter of the fifteenth century. During the greater part of this period *schall*, &c., occurs also in the Pl., and gradually the *schulle(n)* forms are altogether superseded by the Singular type.


The 2nd Pers. Sing. is usually *shall*, the traditional form, but Caxton has the analogical form *shalt*, Jason, 5. 20. Marg. Paston’s *scholl* (Sing.) and *sholl* (Pl.) may have been formed on the analogy of the old form of the Pret.—*schölde*, cf. *wol* from *wölde*, though she does not
usually write the Pret. in this way, or the o may be written for u, in which case the vowel has been introduced from the old Pl. type. Finally, it is just possible that o represents the rounded vowel resulting from earlier shaul, for the explanation of which see p. 201, above.

The commonest spelling of the Pret. in the fifteenth century seems to be schulde, and this is used by nearly all the writers above cited. Shillingford, however, writes sholde, and Marg. Paston, shoulde. It seems probable that this last, and the ou spellings, express [ʊ], which is that natural development of the vowel in M.E. scholde in stressed positions. The l was probably lost early, in unstressed positions at any rate, though the traditional spelling is rarely departed from in this word. I have, however, noted shud, Elyot's Gounnour, 70, shudd, Gabr. Harvey's Ltrs. 3, and shud, in a letter of Cary Verney, V. Mem. ii. 67. The vowel in the present-day Weak form of should shows that this is a new formation, in the Early Modern period, from the stressed form [ʃu(ʊ)d]. The old spelling of the Pret. shold lasts far into the sixteenth century; Latimer writes both shold and should; Euphues also has both spellings.

Will. The forms wille, wile, wil, &c., occur commonly in M.E., alongside wule, the vowel of which seems to be a rounding of i after w. Chaucer has wil, but more commonly wol, which is very common in the fourteenth century. It may be explained sometimes as a mere orthographical variant of wule, &c., but it is also often a distinct new form made on the analogy of the Pret. wol-de. It is this that gives rise to the negative won't (for wol not). Both will and wol occur throughout the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, some writers using both forms, others chiefly wol, others only will, &c. Pallad. has both, Bokenam, wyl, Marg. Paston, wul and wol; St. Editha, ychulle (I will), he woole; Sustr. Men., Fortescue, and Caxton, wol, wole. Bp. Knight (1513) has wyl in Pl. and wol in Sing., but the distinction is probably accidental. Lord Berners has wol, Latimer, wyl, Cavendish, wyll and wol, Euphues, wil.

Can. The O. and M.E. distinction between Sing. and Pl. survives in the fifteenth century to some extent; Pecok has cunnen for the latter. Bokenam has kun for both Sing. and Pl., but also kan for the former.

The past tense is still coulhen (Pl.) in Pecok, couzihe in St. Editha, cowde in Bokenam, Marg. Paston, and Lord Berners. The latter also writes could, and this remains the usual form, with occasional colde, for the sixteenth century and later. The l has no historical justification, and is due to the analogy of wolde.

Elyot has a strange P. P. kanned, with the sense of known.

The Inf. is used after another Auxiliary throughout the fifteenth century, the old form, kunne, being used by Pecok, kon by Marg. Paston, cone by Caxton—as in hit shall not cone kepe it secrete, Jason, 13. 6.

May. The old Pl. mowen, as used in Chaucer's time, from O.E. mōgon, survives throughout the first three quarters of the fifteenth century, and is found in Hoccleve, Shillingford, Pecok, Fortescue, and Caxton. An Inf. mowen 'to be able', is used after other Auxiliaries by Marg. Paston, Sustr. Men., Fortescue, and Caxton.

The past tense mought is found in Sir Thos. More (Ellis ii. p. 289), Elyot, i. 164, passim, and Queen Elizabeth's early letters (mought), Ellis i. 2. 157, 1549.

have. See note on have, Appendix VI.
CHAPTER X

COLLOQUIAL IDIOM

The uttered speech of private life is fluctuating and variable. In every period it varies according to the age, class, education, and habits of the speaker. His social experience, traditions and general background, his ordinary tastes and pursuits, his intellectual and moral cultivation are all reflected in each man's conversation. These factors determine and modify a man's mode of speech in innumerable ways. They may affect his pronunciation, the speed of his utterance, his choice of vocabulary, the shade of meaning he attaches to particular words, or turns of phrase, the character of such similes and metaphors as occur in his speech, his word order and the structure of his sentences.

But the individual speaker is also affected by the character of those to whom he speaks. He adjusts himself in a hundred subtle ways to the age, status, and mental attitude of the company in which he finds himself. His own state of mind, and the mode of its expression are unconsciously modified by and attuned to the varying degree of intimacy, agreement, and community of experience in which he may stand with his companions of the moment.

Thus an accomplished man of the world, in reality, speaks not one but many slightly different idioms, and passes easily and instinctively, often perhaps unknown to himself, from one to another, according to the exigence of circumstances. The man who does not possess, to some extent at least, this power of adjustment, is of necessity a stranger in every company but that of one particular type. No man who is not a fool will consider it proper to address a bevy of Bishops in precisely the same way as would be perfectly natural and suitable among a party of fox-hunting country gentlemen.

A learned man, accustomed to choose his own topics of conversation and dilate upon them at leisure in his College common room where he can count upon the civil forbearance of other people like himself, would be thought a tedious bore, and a dull one at that, if he carried his pompous verbiage into the Officers' Mess of a smart regiment. 'A meere scholler is but a woefull creature', says Sir Edmund Verney, in a letter in which he discusses a proposal that his son should be sent to Leyden, and observes concerning this—'tis too private for a youth of his yeares that must see company at convenient times, and study men as well as bookees, or else his bearing may make him rather ridiculous than esteemed'.

There is naturally a large body of colloquial expression which is common to all classes, scholars, sportsmen, officers, clerics, and the rest, but each class and interest has its own special way of expressing itself, which is more or less foreign to those outside it. The average colloquial
speech of any age is at best a compromise between a variety of different jargons, each evolved in and current among the members of a particular section of the community, and each, within certain social limits, affects and is affected by the others. Most men belong by their circumstances or inclinations to several speech-communities, and have little difficulty in maintaining themselves creditably in all of these. The wider the social opportunities and experience of the individual, and the keener his linguistic instinct, the more readily does he adapt himself to the company in which he finds himself, and the more easily does he fall into line with its accepted traditions of speech and bearing.

But if so much variety in the details of colloquial usage exists in a single age, with such well-marked differences between the conventions of each, how much greater will be the gulf which separates the types of familiar conversation in different ages. Do we realize that if we could, by the workings of some Time Machine, be suddenly transported back into the seventeenth century, most of us would find it extremely difficult to carry on, even among the kind of people most nearly corresponding with those with whom we are habitually associated in our present age, the simplest kind of decent social intercourse? Even if the pronunciation of the sixteenth century offered no difficulty, almost every other element which goes to make up the medium of communication with our fellows would do so.

We should not know how to greet or take leave of those we met, how to express our thanks in an acceptable manner, how to ask a favour, pay a compliment, or send a polite message to a gentleman's wife. We should be at a loss how to begin and end the simplest note, whether to an intimate friend, a near relative, or to a stranger. We could not scold a footman, commend a child, express in appropriate terms admiration for a woman's beauty, or aversion to the opposite quality. We should hesitate every moment how to address the person we were talking to, and should be embarrassed for the equivalent of such instinctive phrases as—look here, old man; my dear chap; my dear Sir; excuse me; I beg your pardon; I'm awfully sorry; Oh, not at all; that's too bad; that's most amusing; you see; don't you know; and a hundred other trivial and meaningless expressions with which most men fill out their sentences. Our innocent impulses of pleasure, approval, dislike, anger, disgust, and so on, would be nipped in the bud for want of words to express them. How should we say, on the spur of the moment—what a pretty girl!; what an amusing play!; how clever and witty Mr. Jones is!; poor woman; that's a perfectly rotten book; I hate the way she dresses; look here, Sir, you had better take care what you say; Oh, shut up; I'm hanged if I'll do that; I'm very much obliged to you, I'm sure?

It is very probable that we perfectly grasp the equivalents of all these and a thousand others when we read them in the pages of Congreve and his contemporaries, but it is equally certain that the right expressions would not rise naturally to our lips as we required them, were we suddenly called upon to speak with My Lady Froth, or Mr. Brisk.

The fact is that we should feel thoroughly at sea in such company, and should soon discover that we had to learn a new language of polite society.
If we did not realize this, but insisted on speaking in our own way, we should be made to feel before long that we were outraged every convention and sense of decorum which that not very decorous age possessed. We should appear at once too familiar and too stiff and stilted; too prim and too outspoken; too pompous and too much lacking in ceremonious observance.

In any case we should cut a very sorry figure.

Now to exhibit, in a single chapter, even in the merest outline, the genius of the English colloquial idiom of several centuries, is an impossible task. Each century would need to be the subject of a thorough investigation, and all possible sources of information would require to be exploited to the full. Again, the various aspects of colloquial speech life must be examined, and the different elements arranged and grouped according to some principle of classification. Such a work, for a single age, would profitably occupy the time of a band of inquirers for many years, and even then it would be necessarily incomplete. As Mr. Henry Bradley has well remarked in his chapter on Shakespeare's Language:—

'At no period—not even in our own time, which has an unexampled abundance of prose fiction dealing with all aspects of contemporary life—has the colloquial vocabulary and idiom of the English Language been completely preserved in the literature. The homely expressions of everyday intercourse, the phrases of contemporary currency alluding to recent events, the slang words and uses of words characteristic of particular classes of society—all these have been but very imperfectly recorded in the writings of any age.'

A very perfunctory treatment of a vast subject is all that can be attempted here. If it suffices to interest a certain number of readers in the general question, and in some of the details here touched upon, so that they pursue the subject for themselves; if a few of these readers should be stimulated to devote some of their time to a systematic investigation of such parts of the matter here dealt with, or of others which are here omitted, then this short study will not have failed altogether of its object.

It is proposed to deal here with the subject in the following manner.

In the first place characteristic specimens will be given, of dialogue when this is available, otherwise of passages from letters of a colloquial character, to illustrate the general features and tone of familiar English from the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries inclusive.

Following these specimens of whole passages, we shall attempt to illustrate certain special and particular elements in the conversation of everyday life. Those selected come principally under the following heads:—

Modes of greeting; farewells; compliments and complimentary banter; endearments; angry and abusive speeches among equals, or addressed to inferiors; expressions of approval and disapproval.

Oaths, imprecations, expletives, exclamatory and interjectional expressions; emphatics.

Preciosities, affectations, and euphemisms.

The term Colloquial is so far extended as to include formulas used in beginning and ending letters, nor are the examples of these confined entirely to purely familiar epistles written to intimates, but include also the beginnings and endings of letters of a more formal character.
In illustrating the colloquial style of the fifteenth century we have to be content, either with the account of conversations given in letters, or with such other passages from letters of the period as appear to be nearest to the speech of everyday life.

The following passages are from the Shillingford Letters, to which reference is repeatedly made in this book (see p. 65, &c.), and are extracted from the accounts given by the stout and genial Mayor of Exeter, in letters to his friends, of his conversations with the Chancellor during his visit to London.

Shillingford begins by referring to himself as ‘the Mayer’, but suddenly changes to the first person—y—in describing the actual meeting, again returning for a moment to the impersonal phrase.

John Shillingford.

‘The Saterdey next (28 Oct. 1447) therafter the mayer came to Westminster sone apon ix. atte belle, and ther mette w* my lorde Chancellor atte brede done a litell fro the steire fote comyng fro the Sterrechamber, y yn the coure and by the done knellyng and salutyng hym yn the moste godely wyse that y cowde and recommended yn to his gode and gracious lordship my feloship and all the comminalte, his awne peele and bedmen of the Cite of Exceter. He seyde to the mayer ij tymes “Well come” and the iijde tyme “Right well come Mayer” and helde the Mayer a grete while faste by the honde, and so went forth to his barge and w* hym grete presse, lordis and other, &c. and yn especiall the tresorer of the kynges houshoide, w* whom he was at right grete pryvy communication. And therfor y, mayer, drowe me apart, and mette w* hym at his goyng yn to his barge, and ther toke my leve of hym, seyyng these wordis, “My lord, y wolle awayte apon youre gode lordship and youre better leyser at another tyme”. He seyde to me ayen, “Mayer, y pray yow hertely that ye do so, and that ye speke w* the Chief Justyse and what that ever he will y woll be all redy”. And thus departed.’—pp. 5, 6.

A little later:—

‘Nerthelez y awayted my tyme and put me yn presse and went right to my lorde Chaunceller and seide, “My lorde y am come at your commande-ment, but y se youre grete bysynesse is suche that ye may not attende”. He seide “Noo, by his trauthe and that y myght right well se”. Y seide “Yee, and that y was sory and hadde pyty of his grete vexacion”. He seide “Mayer, y moste to morun ride by tyme to the Kyng, and come ayen this wyke: ye most awayte apon my comyng, and then y wol speke w* the justise and attende for yow”, &c.—p. 7.

‘He seyde “Come the morun Monedey” (the Chancellor was speaking on Sunday) . . . “the love of God” Y seyd the tyme was to shorte, and prayed hym of Wendysdey; y enfourmed hym (of t)he grete malice and venym that they have spatte to me yn theire answeris as hit appereth yn a copy that y sende to yow of. My lorde seide, “Alagge alagge, why wolde they do so? y woll sey right sharply to ham therfor and y nogh”.’

Margery Brews.

The following brief extracts from the letters of Margery Brews, the affianced wife of John Paston (junior) are like a ray of sunlight in the dreary wilderness of business and litigation, which are the chief subjects of correspondence between the Pastons. Even this love-letter is not
wholly free from the taint, but the girl's gentle affection for her lover is the prevailing note.

'Yf that ye cowde be content with that good and my por persone I wold be the myreyest mayden on grounde, and yf ye thynek not your selfe soo satysfyed or that ye myght hale much mor good, as I hafe undyrstonde be youe afor; good trewe and lovyng volentyne, that ye take no such labur upon yowe, as to come more for that matter, but let it passe, and never more to be spokyn of, as I may be your trewe lover and bedewoman during my lyfe.'—Paston Letters, iii, p. 172 (1477).

A few years later Mrs. Paston writes to her 'trewe and lovyng volentyne':—

'My mother in lawe thynketh longe she here no word from you. She is in goode heale, blissed be God, and al your babees also. I marvel I here no word from you, weche greveth me ful evele. I sent you a letter be Basiour sone of Norwiche, wher of I have no word.' To this the young wife adds the touching postscript:—'Sir I pray yow if ye tary longe at London that it wil plese to sende for me, for I thynke longe sen I lay in your armes.'—Paston Letters, iii, p. 293 (1482).

Sir Thomas More.

No figure in the early part of Henry VIII's reign is more distin­guished and at the same time more engaging than that of Sir Thomas More. A few typical records of his conversation, as preserved by his devoted biographer and son-in-law Roper, are chosen to illustrate the English of this time. The context is given so that the extracts may appear in Roper's own setting.

'Not long after this the Watter baylife of London (sometyme his servaunte) hereing, where he had bee at dinner, certayne Marchauntes liberally to rayle against his ould Master, waxed so discontented therwith, that he hastily came to him, and tould him what he had hard: "and were I Sir" (quoth he) "in such favour and authoritie with my Prince as you are, such men surely should not be suffered so villanously and falsly to misreport and slander me. Wherefore I would wish you to call them before you, and to there shame, for there lewde malice to punnish them." Who smilinge upon him sayde, "Mr Watter Baylie, would you have me punnish them by whome I receave more benefit then by you all that be my frendes? Let them a Gods name speake as lewdly as they list of me, and shoote never soe many arrowes at me, so long as they do not hitt me, what am I the worse? But if the should once bitt me, then would it a little trouble me: howbeit, I trust, by Gods helpe, there shall none of them all be able to touch me. I have more cause, Mr Water Bayly (I assure thee) to pittie-them, then to be angrie with them." Such frutfull communication had he often tymes with his familier frendes. Soe on a tyme walking a long the Thames syde with me at Chelsey, in talkinge of other thinges he sayd to me, "Now, would to God, Sonne Roger, upon condition three things are well estab­lished in Christendome, I were put ip a sacke, and here presently cast into the Thames." "What great thinges be these, Sir" quoth I, "that should move you so to wish?" "Wouldest thou know, sonne Roper, what they be" quoth he? "Yea marry, Sir, with a good will if it please you", quoth I. "I faith, they be these Sonne"', quoth he. The first is, that where as the most part of Christian princes be at mortall warrs, they weare at universal peace. The second, that wheare the Church of Christ is at this present
soare afflicted with many heresies and errors, it were well settled in an uniformity. The third, that where the Kinges matter of his marriage is now come into question, it were to the glory of God and quietnesse of all parties brought to a good conclusion: where by, as I could gather, he judged, that otherwise it would be a disturbance to a great part of Christendome.'

' When Sir Thomas Moore had continued a good while in the Tower, my Ladye his wife obtayned license to see him, who at her first comminge like a simple woman, and somewhat worldlie too, with this manner of salutations bluntly saluted him, "What the good yeare, Mr Moore' quoth shee, "I marvell that you, that have beene allwayes hitherunto taken for soe wise a man, will now soe playe the foole to lye here in this close filthie prison, and be content to be shutt upp amonge myse and rattes, when you might be abroad at your libertie, and with the favour and good will both of the King and his Councell, if you would but doe as all the Bushoppes and best learned of this Realme have done. And seeing you have at Chelsey a right fayre house, your librarie, your books, your gallerie, your garden, your orchards, and all other necessaries soe handsomely about you, where you might, in the companie of me your wife, your children, and houchould be merrie, I muse what a Gods name you meane here still thus fondlye to tarry," After he had a while quietely hard her, "I pray thee good M™ Alice, tell me, tell me one thinge." "What is that?" (quoth shee). "Is not this house as nighe heaven as myne owne?" To whome shee, after her accustomed fashion, not likeinge such talke, answeared, "Tille valle, Tille valle" "How say you, M™ Alice, is it not soe?" quoth he. "Bone deus, bone Deus, man, will this geare never be left?" quoth shee. "Well then M™ Alice, if it be soe, it is verie well. For I see noe great cause while I should soe much joye of my gaie house, or of any thinge belonginge thereunto, when, if I should but seaven yeares lye buried under ground, and then arise, and come thither againe, I should not fayle to finde some therin that would bidd me gett out of the doores, and tell me that weare none of myne. What cause have I then to like such an house as would soe soone forgett his master?' Soe her perswasions moved him but a little.'

The last days of this good man on earth, and some of his sayings just before his death, are told with great simplicity by Roper. We cannot forbear to quote the affecting passage which tells of Sir Thomas More's last parting from his daughter, the writer's wife.

' When Sir Tho. Moore came from Westminster to the Towre againe, his daughter my wife, desireous to see her father, whome shee thought shee should never see in this world after, and alsoe to have his finall blessinge, gave attendaunce aboutes the Towre wharfe, where shee knewe he should passe by, e're he could enter into the Towre. There tarriinge for his cominge home, as soone as shee sawe him, after his blessinges on her knees reverentlie receaved, shee hastinge towards, without consideration and care of her selfe, pressinge in amongest the midst of the thronge and the Companie of the Guard, that with Hollbards and Billes weare round about him, hastily ranne to him, and then openlye in the sight of all them embraced and tooke him about the necke, and kissed him, whoe well likeing her most daughterly love and affection towards him, gave her his fatherlie blessinge, and manye goodlie words of comfort besides, from whome after shee was departed, shee not satisfied with the former sight of her deare father, havinge respecte neither to her self, nor to the presse of the people and multitude that were about him, suddenlye turned backe againe, and rann to him as before, tooke him about the necke, and divers tymes togetheer most lovingley kissed him, and at last with a full heavie harte was fayne to departe from him; the behouldinge whereof was to manye of them that were
present thereat soe lamentable, that it made them for very sorrow to mourne and weepe.'

In his last letter to his 'dearely beloved daughter, written with a Cole', Sir Thomas More refers to this incident:—'And I never liked your manners better, then when you kissed me last. For I like when daughterlie Love, and deare Charitie hath noe leasure to looke to worldlie Cuities'.

Next morning 'Sir Thomas even, and the Utas of St. Peeter in the yeare of our Lord God 1537 ... earlie in the morninge, came to him Sir Thomas Pope, his singular trend, on messedge from the Kinge and his Councell, that hee should before nyne of the clocke in the same morninge suffer death, and that therefore forthwith he should prepare himselfe thereto. “Mr Pope” sayth he, “for your good tydinges I most hartily thank you. I have beene allwayes bounden much to the Kinges Highnes for the benefitts and honors which he hath still from tyme to tyme most bountifully heaped upon mee, and yete more bounden I ame to his Grace for putting me into this place, where I have had convenient tyme and space to have remembraunce of my end, and soe helpe me God most of all Mr Pope, am I bound to his Highnes, that it pleased him so shortlie to ridd me of the miseries of this wretched world. And therefore will I not fayle most earnestlye to praye for his Grace both here, and alsoe in another world. ... And I beseech you, good Mr Pope, to be a meane unto his Highnes, that my daughter Margaretle may be present at my buriall.” “The King is well contented allreadie” (quoth Mr Pope) “that your Wife, Children and other frendes shall have free libertie to be present theret”. “O how much behoulden” then said Sir Thomas Moore “am I to his Grace, that unto my poore buriall vouchsafeth to have so gratious Consideration.” Wherewithall Mr Pope takeinge his leave of him could not refrayne from weeping, which Sir Tho. Moore perceaving, comforted him in this wise, “Quiete yourselfe good Mr Pope, and be not discomforted. For I trust that we shall once in heaven see each other full merily, where we shall bee sure to live and love togeather in joyfull blisse eternally.”

Wolsey.

The Life of Wolsey (1557), by George Cavendish, a faithful and devoted servant of the Cardinal, who was with him on his death-bed, gives a wonderfully interesting picture of this remarkable man, in affluence and in adversity, and records a number of conversations which have a convincing air of verisimilitude. The following specimens are taken from the Kelmscott Press edition of 1893, which follows the spelling of the author’s MS. in the British Museum.

‘After ther departyng, my lord came to the sayd housse of Eston to his lodging, where he had to supper with hymе dyvers of his frendes of the court. And syttyng at supper, in came to hymе Doctor Stephyns, the secretary, late ambassitor unto Rome; but to what entent he came I know not; bowbeit my lord toke it that he came bothe to dissembell a certeyn obedynce and love towards hymе, or ells to espie hys behaviour, and to here his commynycacion at supper. Not withstandingly my lord bade hymе well come, and commaundyd hymе to sytt down at the table to supper; with whom my lord had thys commynycacion with hymе under thys maner. Mayster Secretary, quod my lord, ye be-welcome home owt of Italy; what came ye frome Rome? Forsothe, quod he, I came home.
allmost a monethe agoo; and where quod my lord have you byn ever sence? Forsothe, quod he, folowyng the court this progresse. Than have ye hunted and had good game and pastyme. Forsothe, Syr, quod he, and so I have, I thakne the kyngs Majestie. What good greynounds have ye? quod my lord. I have some syr quod he. And thus in huntyng, and in lyke disports, passed they all ther commynyacions at supper. And after supper my lord and he talked secretly together until it was mydnyght or they departed.'—p. 143.

'Than all thyng beyng ordered as it is before reherced, my lord prepared hymne to depart by water. And before his departyng he commandyd Syr William Gascoyne, his treasurer, to se these thyngs before remembred, delyverd safely to the kyng at his repayer. That don, the seyd Syr William seyd unto my lord. Syr I ame sorry for your grace, for I understand ye shall goo strayt way to the tower. Ys this the good comfort and councell, quod my lord, that ye can geve your mayster in adversitie? Yt hathe byn allwayes your naturall inclynacion to be very light of credytt, and mych more lighter in reporting of false newes, I wold ye shold knowe, Syr William, and all other suche blasphemers, that it is nothyng more false than that, for I never, thanks be to god, deserved by no wayes to come there under any arrest; althougbhe it hathe pleased the kyng to take my howse redy furnyshed for his pleasyr at this tyme. I wold all the world knewe, and so I confesse to have no thyng, other riches, honour, or dignyty, that hathe not growen of hyme and by hyme; therefore it is my veire dewtie to surrender the same to hyme agayn as his very owen, with al my hart, or ells I ware and onkynd servaunt. Therefore goo your wayes, and geve good attendaunce unto your charge, that no thyng be embeselled.'—p. 149.

'And the next day we removed to Sheffeld Parke, where therele of Shrewesbury lay within the loge, and all the way therewader the people cried and lamented, as they dyd in all places as we rode before. And whan we came in to the parke of Sheffeld, nyghe to the logge, my lord of Shrewesbury, with my lady his wyfe, a trayn of gentillwomen, and all my lords gentilmen and yomen, standyng without the gatts of the logge to attend my lords commyng, to receyve hyme with myche honor; whome therle embraced, sayeng these words. My lord quod he, your grace is most hartely welcome unto me, and glade to se you in my poore loge; the whiche I have often desired; and myche more gladder if you had come after another sort. Ah, my gentill lord of Shrewesbury quod my lord, I hartely thanke you; and althoughe I have no cause to rejoyce, yet as a sorowe full hart may joye, I rejoyce my chaunce, which is so good to come into the hands and custody of so noble a persone, whose approved honor and wysdome hathe byn allwayes right well knowen to all nobell estats. And Sir, howe soever my ongentill accusers hathe used ther accusations agenst me, yet I assure you, and so byfore your lordshiphe and all the world do I protest, that my demeanor and procedyngs hathe used ther accusations agenst me, yet I assure you, and so byfore your lordshiphe and all the world do I protest, that my demeanor and procedyngs hathe used ther accusations agenst me, yet I assure you, and so byfore your lordshiphe and all the world do I protest, that my demeanor and procedyngs hathe used ther accusations agenst me, yet I assure you, and so byfore your lordshiphe and all the world do I protest, that my demeanor and procedyngs hathe used ther accusations agenst me, yet I assure you, and so byfore your lordshiphe and all the world do I protest, that my demeanor and procedyngs hathe used ther accusations agenst me, yet I assure you, and so byfore your lordshiphe and all the world do I protest, that my demeanor and procedyngs hathe used ther accus
into the logge, conductyng my lord into a fayer chamber at thend of a goodly gallery within a newe tower, and here my lord was lodged.'—p. 246.

Here are some short portions of dialogue between Wolsey and his friends, just before his death:

'Uppon Monday in the mornync, as I stode by his bedds side, abought viii of the clocke, the wyndowes beyng close shett, havyng wake lights burnyng upon the cupbord, I behyld hyme, as me seemed, drawyng fast to his end. He perceyved my shadowe uppon the wall by his bedds side, asked who was there. Sir I ame here, quod I. Howe do you? quod he to me. Very well Sir, if I myght se your grace well. What is it of the clocke? quod he to me. Forsothe Sir, quod I, it is past viii. of the clocke in the mornync. Eight of the clocke, quod he, that cannot be, rehersing dyvers times eight of the clocke, eight of the clocke. Nay, nay, quod he at the last, it cannot be viii of the clocke, for by viii of the clocke ye shal loose your mayster; for my tyme drawyth nere that I must depart out of this world.'

...—p. 265.

'Mayster Kyngston farewell. I can no moore, but whyshe all thyngs to have good successe. My tyme drawyth on fast. I may not tary with you. And forget not I pray you, what I have seyd and charged you with all: for whan I ame deade, ye shall peradventure remember my words myche better. And even with these words he began to drawe his speche at iengthe and his tong to fayle, his eyes beyng set in his hed, whos sight faylled hyme; than we began to put hyme in rembraunce of Christs passion, and sent for the Abbott of the place to annele hyme; who came with all spede and mynestred unto hyme all the servyce to the same belongyng; and caused also the gard to stand by, bothe to here hyme talk byfore his deathe, and also to bere wytnes of the same; and incontinent the clocke strake viii, at whiche tyme he gave uppe the gost, and thus departed he this present lyfe.'—p. 276.

Latimer.

The Sermons of Bp. Latimer present good examples of colloquial oratory, and the style is but little removed from the colloquial style of the period. The following are from the Sermon of the Ploughers, preached in 1548:

'For they that be lordes vyll yll go to plough. It is no mete office for them. It is not semyng for their state. Thus came up lordyng loiterers. Thus crept in vnprechinge prelates, and so haue they longe continued.

'For how many vnlearned prelates haue we now at this day? And no maruel. For if ye plough men yat now be, were made lordes they woulde cleane gyue ouer ploughinge, they woulde leaue of theyr labour and fall to lordyng outright, and let the plough stand. And then bothe ploughes nor walkyng nothyng shoulde be in the common weale but honger. For euer sence the Prelates were made Loordes and nobles, the ploughe standeth, there is no worke done, the people starue.

'Thei hauke, thei hunt, thei card, they dyece, they pastyme in theyr pre­lacies with galaunte gentlemen, with theyr daunsinge minyons, and with theyr freshe companions, so that ploughinge is set a syde. And by the lordinge and loytryng, preachynge and ploughinge is cleane gone . . .—pp. 24, 25.

'But nowe for the defaulte of vnpreaching prelates me thinke I coulde gesse what myghte be sayed for excusynge of them: They are so troublede wyth Lordelye lyuynge, they be so placed in palacies, couched in courtes, ruffelynge in theyr rentes, dancyeing in theyr dominions, burdened with ambassages, pamperynge of theyr paunches lyke a monke that maketh his
Jubilie, mouchyng in their maungers, and moylyng in their gaye manours and mansions, and so troubeled wyth lorteryng in theyr Lordeshyppes: that they canne not attende it. They are other wyse occupied, some in the kynges matters, some are ambassadoures, some of the pryuiie counsell, some to furnyshe the courte, some are Lordes of the Parliamente, some are presidentes, and some comptroleres of myntes. Well, well.

Is thys theyr duetye? Is thys theyr offfyce? Is thys theyr callyng? Should we haue ministers of the church to be comptrollers of the myntes? Is thys a meete offfice for a prieste that hath cure of soules? Is this his charge? I woulde here aske one question: I would fayne knowe who comptrolleth the deuyll at home at his parische, whyle he comptrolleth the mynte? If the Apostles mighte not leaue the office of preaching to be deacons, shall one leaue it for myntyng?

Wilson’s Arte of Rhetorique (1560) has a section ‘Of deliting the hearers, and stirring them to laughter’ in which are enumerated ‘What are the kindes of sporting, or mouing to laughter’. The subject is illustrated by various ‘pleasant’ stories, which if few of them would now make us laugh, are at least couched in a very easy and colloquial style and enlivened by scraps of actual conversation. The most amusing element in the whole chapter is the attitude of the writer to the subject, and the combination of seriousness and scurrility with which it is handled.

‘The occasion of laughter’ says Wilson, ‘and the meane that maketh us mery... is the fondnes, the filthines, the deformitie, and all such euill behauiour as we see to be in other... Now when we would abashe a man for some words that he hath spoken, and can take none aduauntage of his person, or making of his bodie, we either doubt him at the first, and make him beleuue that he is no wiser then a Goose: or els we confute wholly his sayings with some pleaunt iest, or els we extenuate and diminish his doings by some pretie meanes, or els we cast the like in his dish, and with some other devise, dash hym out of countenance: or last of all, we laugh him to scorn out right, and sometimes speake almost neuer a word, but only in contnuauence, shewe our selues pleaunt’.—p. 136.

‘A frend of mine, and a good fellowe, more honest then wealthie, yea and more pleasant then thriftie, hauing need of a nagge for his ioumey that he had in hande, and being in the countrey, minded to go to Partnaie faire in Lincolnshire, not farre from the place where he then laie, and meeting by the way one of his acquaintaunce, told him his arrande, and asked him how horses went at the Faire. The other aunswered merely and saide, some trot sir, and some amble, as farre as I can see. If their paces be altered, I praye you tell me at our next meeting. And so rid away as fast as his horse could cary him, without saying any word more, whereat he then being alone, fel a laughing hartely to him self, and looked after a good while, vntil the other was out of sight.’—p. 140.

‘A Gentleman hauing heard a Sermon at Paules, and being come home, was asked what the preacher said. The Gentleman answered he would first heare what his man could saie, who then waited vpon him, with his hatte and cloake, and calling his man to him, sayd, nowe sir, what haue you brought from the Sermon. Forsothe good Maister, sayd the seruaunt your cloake and your hatte. A honest true dealing seruaunt out of doubt, plaine as a packsaddle, hauing a better soule to God, though his witte was simple, then those haue, that vnder the colour of hearing, giue them selues to priuie picking, and so bring other mens purses home in their bosomes, in the steade of other mens Sermons.’—pp. 141-2.

These two stories are intended to illustrate the point that ‘We shall delite the hearers, when they looke for one answere, and we make them
a cleane contrary, as though we would not seeme to vnnderstand what they would haue'.

'Churlish aunsweres like the hearers sometimes very well. When the father was cast in judgement, the Sonne seeing him weepe: why weepe you Father? (quoth he) To whom his Father aunswered. What? Shall I sing I pray thee seeing by Lawe I am condemned to dye. Socrates likewise bieing moued of his wife, because he should dye an innocent and guiltlesse in the Law: Why for shame woman (quoth he) wilt thou haue me to dye giltie and deseruing. When one had faile into a ditch, an other pitying his fall, asked him and saied: Alas how got you into that pit? Why Gods mother, quoth the other, doest thou aske me how I got in, nay tell me rather in the mischiefe, how I shall get out.'

The nearest approach to the colloquial style in Bacon is to be found in the Apophthegms, in which are scraps of conversation. A few may be quoted, if only on account of the author.

'Master Mason of Trinity College, sent his pupil to an other of the fellows, to borrow a book of him, who told him, "I am loth to lend my books out of my chamber, but if it please thy tutor to come and read upon it in my chamber, he shall as long as he will." It was winter, and some days after the same fellow sent to M'r Mason to borrow his bellows; but M'r Mason said to his pupil, "I am loth to lend my bellows out of my chamber, but if thy tutor would come and blow the fire in my chamber, he shall as long as he will."

—Apophth. 47, p. 113.

'There were fishermen drawing the river at Chelsea: M'r Bacon came thither by chance in the afternoon, and offered to buy their draught: they were willing. He asked them what they would take? They asked thirty shillings. M'r Bacon offered them ten. They refused it. Why then said M'r Bacon, I will be only a looker on. They drew and catched nothing. Saith M'r Bacon, Are not you mad fellows now, that might have had an angel in your purse, to have made merry withal, and to have warmed you thoroughly, and now you must go home with nothing. Ay but, saith the fishermen, we had hope then to make a better gain of it. Saith M'r Bacon, "Well my master, then I will tell you, hope is a good breakfast, but it is a bad supper."—p. 136.

Otway's Comedies have all the coarseness and raciness of dialogue of the latter half of the seventeenth century, and a pretty vein of genuine comicality. They are packed with the familiar slang and colloquialisms of the period. A few passages from Friendship in Fashion illustrate at once the speech and the manners of the day.

Enter Lady SQUEAMISH at the Door.

Sir Noble Clumsey. Hah, my Lady Cousin!—Faith Madam you see I am at it.

Malagene. The Devil's wit, I think; we could no sooner talk of wh—

but she must come in, with a pox to her. Madam, your Ladyship's most humble Servant.

Ldy Squ. Oh, odious! insufferable! who would have thought Cousin, you would have serv'd me so—fough, how he stinks of wine, I can smell him hither.—How have you the Patience to hear the Noise of Fiddles, and spend your time in nasty drinking?

Sir Noble. Hum! 'tis a good Creature: Lovely Lady, thou shalt take thy Glass.

Ldy Squ. Uh gud; murder! I had rather you had offered me a toad.
Sir N. Then Malagene, here's a Health to my Lady Cousin's Pelion upon Ossa.  [Drinks and breaks the Glass.]

Ldy Sgu.  Lord, dear Mr Malagene what's that?

Mal.  A certain Place Madam, in Greece, much talk't of by the Ancients; the noble Gentleman is well read.

Ldy Sgu.  Nay he's an ingenious Person I'll assure you.

Sir N.  Now Lady bright, I am wholly thy Slave: Give me thy Hand, I'll go straight and begin my Grandmother's Kissing Dance; but first deign me the private Honour of thy Lip.

Ldy Sgu.  Nay, fie Sir Noble! how I hate you now! for shame be not so rude: I swear you are quite spoiled. Get you gone you good-natur'd Toad you.  [Exeunt.]

Malegene.  I'm a very good Mimick; I can act Punchinello, Scaramouchir, Harlequin, Prince Prettyman or anything. I can act the rumbling of a Wheel-barrow.

Valentine.  The rumbling of a Wheel-barrow!

Mal.  Ay, the rumbling of a Wheel-barrow, so I say—Nay more than that, I can act a Sow and Pigs, Sausages a broiling, a Shoulder of Mutton a roasting: I can act a fly in a Honey-pot.

Truman.  That indeed must be the Effect of very curious Observation.

Mal.  No, hang it, I never make it my business to observe anything, that is Mechanick. But all this I do, you shall see me if you will: But here comes her Ladyship and Sir Noble.

Ldy Sgu.  Oh, dear Mr Truman, rescue me. Nay Sir Noble for Heav'n's sake.

Sir N.  I tell thee Lady, I must embrace thee: Sir, do you know me! I am Sir Noble Clumsey: I am a Rogue of an Estate, and I live—Do you want any money? I have fifty pounds.

Val.  Nay good Sir Noble, none of your Generosity we beseech you. The Lady, the Lady, Sir Noble.

Sir N.  Nay, 'tis all one to me if you won't take it, there it is.—Hang Money, my Father was an Alderman.

Mal.  'Tis pity good Guineas should be spoil'd, Sir Noble, by your leave.  [Picks up the Guineas.]

Sir N.  But, Sir, you will not keep my Money?

Mal.  Oh, hang Money, Sir, your Father was an Alderman.

Sir N.  Well, get thee gone for an Arch-Wag—I do but sham all this while:—but by Dad he's pure Company. . . . . . . Lady, once more I say be civil, and come kiss me.

Val.  Well done Sir Noble, to her, never spare.

Ldy Sgu.  I may be even with you tho for all this, Mr Valentine: Nay dear Sir Noble: Mr Truman, I'll swear he'll put me into Fits.

Sir N.  No, but let me salute the Hem of thy Garment. Wilt thou marry me?  [Kneels.]

Mal.  Faith Madam do. let me make the Match.

Ldy Sgu.  Let me die Mr Malagene, you are, a strange Man, and I'll swear have a great deal of Wit. Lord, why don't you write?

Mal.  Write? I thank your Ladyship for that with all my Heart. No I have a Finger in a Lampoon or so sometimes, that's all.

Truman.  But he can act.

Ldy Sgu.  I'll swear, and so he does better than any one upon our Theatres; I have seen him. Oh the English Comedians are nothing, not comparable to the French or Italian: Besides we want Poets.

Sir N.  Poets! Why I am a Poet; I have written three Acts of a Play, and have nam'd it already. 'Tis to be a Tragedy.

Ldy Sgu.  Oh Cousin, if you undertake to write a Tragedy, take my
Counsel: Be sure to say soft melting tender things in it that may be moving, and make your Lady's Characters virtuous whate'er you do.

Sir N. Moving! Why, I can never read it myself but it makes me laugh: well, 'tis the pretty'st Plot, and so full of Waggery.

Ldy Squ. Oh ridiculous!

Mal. But Knight, the Title; Knight, the Title.

Sir N. Why let me see; 'tis to be called The Merry Conceits of Love; or the Life and Death of the Emperor Charles the Fifth, with the Humours of his Dog Boabdillo.

Mal. Ha, ha, ha...

Ldy Squ. But dear Mr Malagene, won't you let us see you act a little something of Harlequin? I'll swear you do it so naturally, it makes me think I'm at the Louvre or Whitehall all the time. [Mal. acts.] O Lord, don't, don't neither; I'll swear you'll make me burst. Was there ever anything so pleasant?

Trum. Was ever anything so affected and ridiculous? Her whole Life sure is a continued Scene of Impertinence. What a damn'd Creature is a decay'd Woman, with all the exquisite Silliness and Vanity of her Sex, yet none of the Charms! [Mal. speaks in Punchinello's voice.]

Ldy Squ. O Lord, that, that; that is a Pleasure intolerable. Well, let me die if I can hold out any longer.

A Comparison between the Stages, with an Examen of the Generous Conqueror, printed in 1702, is a dialogue between 'Two Gentlemen', Sullen and Ramble (see below), and 'a Critick', upon the plays of the day and others of an earlier date. The style is that of easy and natural familiar conversation, with little or no artificiality, and incidentally, the tract throws light upon contemporary manners and social habits. The following examples are designed to illustrate the colloquial handling of indifferent topics, and the small-talk of the early eighteenth century, as well as the treatment of the immediate subject of the essay.

Sullen. They may talk of the Country and what they will, but the Park for my money.

Ramble. In its proper Season I grant you, when the Mall is pav'd with lac'd shoes; when the Air is perfum'd with the rosie Breath of so many fine Ladies; when from one end to the other the Sight is entertain'd with nothing but Beauty, and the whole Prospect looks like an Opera.

Suit. And when is it out of Season Ramble?

Ram. When the Beauties desert it; when the absence of this charming Company makes it a Solitude: Then Sullen, the Park is to me no more than a Wilderness, a very Common; and a Grove in a country Garden with a pretty Lady is by much the pleasanter Landscape.

Suit. To a Man of your Quicksilver Constitution it may be so, and the Cuckoo in May may be Music 'tée a hundred Miles off, when all the Masters in Town can't divert you.

Ram. I love everything as Nature and the Nature of Pleasure has contriv'd it; I love the Town in Winter, because then the Country looks aged and deform'd; and I hate the Town in Summer, because then the Country is in its Glory, and looks like a Mistress just drest out for enjoyment.

Sull. Very well distinguish'd: Not like a Bride, but like a Mistress.

Ram. I distinguish 'em by that comparison because I love nothing well enough to be wedded to't: I'm a Proteus in my Appetite, and love to change my Abode with my Inclination.

Sull. I differ from you for the very Reason you give for your change; the Town is evermore the same to me; and tho' the Season makes it look after another manner, yet still it has a Face to please me one way or other, and both Winter and Summer make it agreeable.—pp. 1-3.
Here is a conversation during dinner at the 'Blew Posts'.

Critik. What have you order'd?
Ramb. A Brace of Carp stew'd, a piece of Lamb, and a Sallet; d'ee like it?
Crit. I like anything in the World that will indure Cutting: Prithee Mr Cook make haste or expect I shall Storm thy Kitchin.
Sull. Why thou'rt as hungry as if thou hast been keeping Garrison in Mantua: I don't know whether Flesh and Blood is safe in thy Company.
Crit. I wish with all my Heart thou wert there, that thou mightst understand what it is to fast as I have done: Come, to our Places . . . the blessed hour is come . . . Sit, sit . . . fall to, Graces are out of Fashion.
Ramb. I wish the Charming Madam Subligny were here.
Crit. Gad so don't I: I had rather her Feet were pegg'd down to the Stage; at present my Appetite stands another way: Waiter, some Wine . . . or I shall choak . . .
Sull. This Fellow eats like an Ostrich, the Bones of these great Fish are no more to him than the Bones of an Anchovy; they melt upon his Tongue like marrow Puddings.
Crit. Ay, you may talk, but I'm sure I find 'em not so gentle; here's one yet in my Throat will be my death; the Flask . . . the Flask . . .
Ramb. But Critick, how did you like the Play last Night?
Crit. I'll tell you by and by, Lord Sir, you won't give a Man time to break his Fast: This Fish is such washy Meat . . . a Man can't fix his knife in 't, it runs away from him as if it were still alive, and was afraid of the Hook: Put the Lamb this way.
Sull. The Rogue quarrels with the Fish, and yet you cou'd eat up the whole Pond; the late Whale at Cuckold's point, with all its oderiferous Gar-badge, wou'd ha' been but a Meal to him: Well, how do you like the Lamb? does that feel your knife?
Crit. A little more substantial, and not much: Well, I shou'd certainly be starv'd if I were to feed with the French, I hate their thin slops, their Pottages, Frigaces, and Ragous, where a Man may bury his Hand in the Sauce, and dine upon Steam: No, no, commend me to King Jemmy's English Surloin, in whose gentle Flesh a Man may plunge a Case-knife to the tip of the Handle, and then draw out a Slice that will surfeit half a Score Yeoman of the Guard. Some Wine ye Dog . . . there . . . now I have slain the Giant; and now to your Question . . . what was it you askt me?
Ramb. Won't you stay the Desert? Some Tarts and Cheese?
Crit. I abominate Tarts and Cheese, they're like a faint After-kiss, when a Man is sated with better Sport; there's no more Nourishment in 'em, than in the paring of an Apple. Here Waiter take away . . .
Ramb. Then remove every Thing but the Table-cloth . . .
Ramb. Here Waiter—send to the Booksellers in Pell mell for the Generous Conqueror and make haste . . . you say you know the Author Critick.
Crit. By sight I do, but no further; he's a Gentleman of good Extraction, and for ought I know, of good Sense.
Ramb. Surely that's not to be questioned; I take it for granted that a Man that can write a Play, must be a Man of good Sense.
Crit. That is not always a consequence. I have known many a singing Master have a worse voice than a Parish Clerk, and I know two dancing Masters at this time, that are directly Cripples: . . . A Ship-builder may fit up a Man of War for the West Indies, and perhaps not know his Compas: Or a great Traveller, with Heylin, that writ the Geography of the whole World, may, like him, not know the way from the next Village to his own House.
Ramb. Your Comparisons are remote Mr Critick.
Crit. Not so remote as some successful Authors are from good sense;
Wit and Sense are no more the same than Wit and Humour; nay there is even in Wit an uncertain Mode, a variable Fashion, that is as unstable as the Fashion of our Cloaths: This may be prov'd by their Works who writ a hundred Years ago, compar'd with some of the modern; Sir Philip Sidney, Don, Overbury, nay Ben himself took singular delight in playing with their Words: Sir Philip is everywhere in his Arcadia jugling, which certainly by the example of so great a Man, proves that sort of Wit then in Fashion; now that kind of Wit is call'd Punning and Quibbling, and is become too low for the Stage, nay even for ordinary Converse; so that when we find a Man who still loves that old fashion'd Custom, we make him remarkable, as who is more remarkable than Capt. Swan.

Ramb. Nay, your Quibble does well now a Days, your best Comedies tast of 'em; the Old Batchelor is rank.

Crit. But 'tis every Day decreasing, and Queen Betty's Ruff and Fardingale are no more exploded; But Sense Gentlemen, is and will be the same to the World's end.

Sull. And Nonsense is infinite, for England never had such a Stock and such Variety.

Ramb. Yet I have heard the Poets that flourish'd in the last Reign but two, complain of the same Calamity, and before that Reign the thing was the same: All Ages have produced Murmurers; and in the best of times you shall hear the Trades-man cry—Alas Neighbour! sad Times, very hard Times... not a Penny of Money stirring... Trade is quite dead, and nothing but War... War and Taxes... when to my knowledge the gluttonous Rogue shall drink his two Bottles at Dinner, and his Wife have half a Score of rich Suits, a purse of Gold for the Gallant, and fifty Pounds worth of Gold and Silver Lace on her under Petticoats.

Sull. Nay certainly, this that Ramble now speaks of is a great Truth; those hypocritical Rogues are always grumbling; and tho' our Nation never had such a Trade, or so much Money, yet 'tis all too little for their voracious Appetites: As I live—says he, I can't afford this Silk one Penny cheaper—d'ee mind the Rogues Equivocation? as I live—that is, he lives like a Gentleman—but let him live like a Tradesman and be hang'd; let him wear a Frock, and his Wife a blew Apron.

Ramb. See, the Book's here: go Waiter and shut the Door.—pp. 76-9.

The dialogue of Richardson, 'sounynge in moral vertu', devoid of all the lighter touches, is typical of the age that was beginning, the age of reaction against the levities and negligences in speech and conduct of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.

The following conversation of rather an agitated character, between a mother and daughter, is from Letter XVI, in Clarissa Harlowe (1748):

"... My mother came up to me. I love, she was pleased to say, to come into this appartment.—No emotions child! No flutters!—Am I not your mother?—Am I not your fond, your indulgent mother?—Do not discompose me by discomposing yourself! Do not occasion me uneasiness, when I would give you nothing but pleasure. Come my dear, we will go into your closet... Hear me out and then speak; for I was going to expostulate. You are no stranger to the end of Mr Solmes's visits—O Madam!—Hear me out; and then speak.—He is not indeed everything I wish him to be: but he is a man of probity and has no vices—No vices Madam!—Hear me out child.—You have not behaved much amiss to him: we have seen with pleasure that you have not—O Madam, must I not now speak! I shall have done presently. —A young creature of your virtuous and pius turn, she was pleased to say, cannot surely love a proflicante; you love your brother too well, to wish to see any one who had like to have killed him, and who threatened your uncles and defies us all. You have had your own way six or seven times: we want
to secure you against a man so vile. Tell me (I have a right to know) whether you prefer this man to all others?—Yet God forbid that I should know you do; for such a declaration would make us all miserable. Yet tell me, are your affections engaged to this man?

I know what the inference would be if I had said they were not. You hesitate—You answer me not—You cannot answer me—Rising—Nevermore will I look upon you with an eye of favour—O Madam, Madam! Kill me not with your displeasure—I would not, I need not, hesitate one moment, did I not dread the inference, if I answer you as you wish.—Yet be that inference what it will, your threatened displeasure will make me speak. And I declare to you, that I know not my own heart if it be not absolutely free. And pray, let me ask my dearest Mamma, in what has my conduct been faulty, that like a giddy creature, I must be forced to marry, to save me from—from what? Let me beseech you Madam to be the Guardian of my reputation! Let not your Clarissa be precipitated into a state she wishes not to enter into with any man! And this upon a supposition that otherwise she shall marry herself, and disgrace her whole family.

When then, Clary [passing over the force of my plea] if your heart be free—O my beloved Mamma, let the usual generosity of your dear heart operate in my favour. Urge not upon me the inference that made me hesitate.

I won't be interrupted, Clary—You have seen in my behaviour to you, on this occasion, a truly maternal tenderness; you have observed that I have undertaken the task with some relucrance, because the man is not everything; and because I know you carry your notions of perfection in a man too high.

—Dearest Madam, this one time excuse me! Is there then any danger that I should be guilty of an imprudent thing for the man's sake you hint at? Again interrupted! Am I to be questioned, and argued with? You know this won't do somewhere else. You know it won't. What reason then, ungenerous girl, can you have for arguing with me thus, but because you think from my indulgence to you you may?

What can I say? What can I do? What must that cause be that will not bear being argued upon?

Again! Clary Harlowe—

Dearest Madam forgive me: it was always my pride and my pleasure to obey you. But look upon that man—see but the disagreeableness of his person—Now, Clary, do I see whose person you have in your eye!—Now is Mr Solmes, I see, but comparatively disagreeable; disagreeable only as another man has a much more specious person.

But, Madam, are not his manners equally so?—Is not this the true representation of his mind?—That other man is not, shall not be, anything to me, release me from this one man, whom my heart, unbidden, resists.

Condition thus with your father. Will he bear, do you think, to be thus dialogued with? Have I not conjured you, as you value my peace—What is it that I do not give up?—This very task, because I apprehended you would not be easily persuaded, is a task indeed upon me. And will you give up nothing? Have you not refused as many as have been offered to you? If you would not have us guess for whom, comply; for comply you must, or be looked upon as in a state of defiance with your whole family. And saying thus she arose, and went from me.'

**Miss Austen.**

The following examples of Miss Austen's dialogue are not selected because they are the most sparkling conversations in her works, but rather because they appear to be typical of the way of speech of the period, and further they illustrate Miss Austen's incomparable art. The first passage is from *Emma*, which was written between 1811 and
1816. Mr. Woodhouse and his daughter have just received an invitation to dine with the Coles, enriched tradespeople who had settled in the neighbourhood. Emma's view of them was that they were 'very respectable in their way, but they ought to be taught that it was not for them to arrange the times on which the superior families would visit them.' On the present occasion, however, 'she was not absolutely without inclination for the party. The Coles expressed themselves so properly—there was so much real attention in the manner of it—so much consideration for her father.' Emma having decided in her own mind to accept the invitation—some of her intimate friends were going—it remained to explain to her father, the ailing and fussy Mr. Woodhouse, that he would be left alone without his daughter's company for the evening, as it was out of the question that he should accompany her. 'He was soon pretty well resigned.'

'"I am not fond of dinner-visiting," said he; "I never was. No more is Emma. Late hours do not agree with us. I am sorry Mr and Mrs Cole should have done it. I think it would be much better if they would come in one afternoon next summer and take their tea with us; take us in their afternoon walk, which they might do, as our hours are so reasonable, and yet get home without being out in the damp of the evening. The dews of a summer evening are what I would not expose anybody to. However as they are so very desirous to have dear Emma dine with them, and as you will both be there [this refers to his friend Mr Weston and his wife], and Mrs Knightley too, to take care of her I cannot wish to prevent it, provided the weather be what it ought, neither damp, nor cold, nor windy." Then turning to Mr Weston with a look of gentle reproach—"Ah, Miss Taylor, if you had not married, you would have stayed at home with me."

"Well, Sir", cried Mr Weston, "as I took Miss Taylor away, it is incumbent upon me to supply her place, if I can; and I will step to Mrs Goddard in a moment if you wish it." . . . With this treatment Mr Woodhouse was soon composed enough for talking as usual. "He should be happy to see Mrs Goddard. He had a great regard for Mrs Goddard; and Emma should write a line and invite her. James could take the note. But first there must be an answer written to Mrs Cole."

"You will make my excuses, my dear, as civilly as possible. You will say that I am quite an invalid, and go nowhere, and therefore must decline their obliging invitation; beginning with my compliments, of course. But you will do everything right. I need not tell you what is to be done. We must remember to let James know that the carriage will be wanted on Tuesday. I shall have no fears for you with him. We have never been there above once since the new approach was made; but still I have no doubt that James will take you very safely; and when you get there you must tell him at what time you would have him come for you again; and you had better name an early hour. You will not like staying late. You will get tired when tea is over."

"But you would not wish me to come away before I am tired, papa?"

"Oh no my love; but you will soon be tired. There will be a great many people talking at once. You will not like the noise."

"But my dear Sir," cried Mr Weston, "if Emma comes away early, it will be breaking up the party."

"And no great harm if it does" said Mr Woodhouse. "The sooner every party breaks up the better."

"But you do not consider how it may appear to the Coles. Emma's going away directly after tea might be giving offense. They are good-natured people, and think little of their own claims; but still they must feel that anybody's hurrying away is no great compliment; and Miss Woodhouse's
The next example is in a very different vein. It is from *Sense and Sensibility* (chap. xxi) and records the mode of conversation of the Miss Steeles. These two ladies are among Miss Austen's vulgar characters, and their speech lacks the restraint and decorum which he better-bred personages invariably exhibit. While the Miss Steeles' conversation is in sharp contrast with that of the Miss Dashwoods, with whom they are here engaged, both in substance and manner, it evidently passed muster among many of the associates of the latter, especially with their cousin Sir John Middleton, in whose house, as relations of his wife's, the Miss Steeles are staying. Apart from the vulgarity of thought, the diction appears low when compared with that of most of Miss Austen's characters. As a matter of fact it is largely the way of speech of the better society of an earlier age, which has come down in the world, and survives among a pretentious provincial bourgeoisie.

"What a sweet woman Lady Middleton is" said Lucy Steele . . . "And Sir John too" cried the elder sister, "what a charming man he is!" . . . "And what a charming little family they have! I never saw such fine children in my life. I declare I quite doat upon them already, and indeed I am always distraactly fond of children." "I should guess so" said Elinor with a smile "from what I witnessed this morning."

"I have a notion" said Lucy, "you think the little Middletons rather too much indulged; perhaps they may be the outside of enough; but it is natural in Lady Middleton; and for my part I love to see children full of life and spirits; I cannot bear them if they are tame and quiet."

"I confess" replied Elinor, "that while I am at Barton Park, I never think of tame and quiet children with any abhorrence."

"And how do you like Devonshire, Miss Dashwood? (said Miss Steele) I suppose you were very sorry to leave Sussex."

In some surprise at the familiarity of this question, or at least in the manner in which it was spoken, Elinor replied that she was.

"Norland is a prodigious beautiful place, is not it?" added Miss Steele.

"We have heard Sir John admire it excessively," said Lucy, who seemed to think some apology necessary for the freedom of her sister. "I think
**Greetings and Farewells.**

Only the slightest indication can be given of the various modes of greeting and bidding farewell. These seem to have been very numerous, and less stereotyped in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries than at present. It is not easy to be sure how soon the formulas which we now employ, or their ancestral forms, came into current use. The same form often serves both at meeting and parting.

In 1451, Agnes Paston records, in a letter, that ‘after evynsonge, Angnes Ball com to me to my clossett and bad me good evyn’. In the account, quoted above, p. 362, given by Shillingford of his meetings with the Chancellor, about 1447, he speaks of ‘saluting hym yn the moste godely wyse that y coude,’ but does not tell us the form he used. The Chancellor, however, replies ‘Welcome, ij times, and the iijde tyme “Right wel come Mayer”, and helde the Mayer a grete while faste by the honde’.

In the sixteenth century a great deal of ceremonial embracing and kissing was in vogue. Wolsey and the King of France, according to Cavendish, rode forward to meet each other, and they embraced each other on horseback. Cavendish himself when he visits the castle of the Lord of Crépin, a great nobleman, in order to prepare a lodging for
the Cardinal, is met by this great personage, who 'at his first coming embraced me, saying I was right heartily welcome'. Henry VIII was wont to walk with Sir Thomas More, 'with his arm about his neck'. The actual formula used in greeting and leave-taking is too often unrecorded. When the French Embassy departs from England, whom Wolsey has so splendidly entertained, Cavendish says—'My lord, after humble commendations had to the French King bade them adieu'. The Earl of Shrewsbury greets the Cardinal thus—'My Lord, your Grace is most heartily welcome unto me', and Wolsey replies 'Ah my gentle Lord of Shrewsbury, I heartily thank you'.

It is not until the appearance of plays that we find the actual forms of greeting recorded with frequency. In Roister Doister, there are a fair number:—God keep thee worshipful Master Roister Doister; Welcome my good wenche; God you saue and see Nourse; and the reply to this—Welcome friend Merrygreeke; Good night Roger old knaue, farewell Roger old knaue; well met, I bid you right welcome. A very favourite greeting is God be with you.

God continue your Lordship is a form of farewell in Chapman's Monsieur D'Olive, and God-den 'good evening', occurs in Middleton's Chaste Maid in Cheapside. Sir Walter Whorehound in the same play makes use of the formula 'I embrace your acquaintance Sir', to which the reply is 'It vous your service Sir'. Massinger's New Way to pay old Debts contains various formulas of greeting. I am still your creature, says Allworth to his step-mother Lady A. on taking leave; of two old domestics he takes leave with 'my service to both', and they reply 'ours waits on you'. In reply to the simple Farewell Tom, of a friend, Allworth answers 'All joy stay with you'. Sir Giles Overreach greets Lord Lovel with 'Good day to My Lord'; and the prototype of the modern how are you is seen in Lady Allworth's 'How dost thou Marrallf? A graceful greeting in this play is 'You are happily encountered'.

The later seventeenth-century comedies exhibit the characteristic urbanity of the age in their formulas of greeting and leave-taking.

'A happy day to you Madam', is Victoria's morning compliment to Mrs. Goodvile in Otway's Friendship in Fashion, and that lady replies—'Dear Cousin, your humble servant'. Sir Wilfull Witwoud in Congreve's Way of the World, says 'Save you Gentleman and Lady' on entering a room. His younger brother, on meeting him, greets him with 'Your servant Brother', and the knight replies 'Your servant! Why yours Sir, Your servant again; 's heart, and your Friend and Servant to that'. I'm everlastingly your humble servant, deuce take me Madam, says Mr. Brisk to Lady Froth, in the Double Dealer.

Your servant is a very usual formula at this period, on joining or leaving company. In Vanbrugh's Journey to London, Colonel Courtoy on entering is greeted by Lady Headpiece—Colonel your servant; her daughter Miss Betty varies it with—Your servant Colonel, and the visitor replies to both—Ladies, your most obedient.

Mr. Trim, the formal coxcomb in Shadwell's Bury Fair, parts thus from his friends—Sir, I kiss your hands; Mr. Wildish—Sir your most humble servant; Trim—Mr Oldwit I am your most faithful servant; Mr. Oldwit—Your servant sweet Mr Trim.
BEGINNINGS AND ENDINGS OF LETTERS

Your servant, madam good morrow to you, is Lady Arabella's greeting to Lady Headpiece, who replies—And to you Madam (Vanbrugh's Journey to London). The early eighteenth century appears not to differ materially from the preceding in its usage. Lord Formal in Fielding's Love in Several Masques, says Ladies your most humble servant, and Sir Apish in the same play—Your Ladyship's everlasting creature.

Epistolary Formulas.

The writing of letters, both familiar and formal, is such an inevitable part of everyday life, that it seems legitimate to include here some examples of the various methods of beginning and ending private letters from the early fifteenth century onwards. A proper and exhaustive treatment of the subject would demand a rather elaborate classification, according to the rank and status of both the writer and the recipient, and the relation in which they stood to each other—whether master and servant, or dependant, friend, subject, child, spouse, and so on. In the comparatively few examples here given, out of many thousands, nothing is attempted beyond a chronological arrangement. The status and relationship of the parties is, however, given as far as possible. We note that the formula employed is frequently a conventional and more or less fixed phrase which recurs, with slight variants, again and again. At other times the opening and closing phrases are of a more personal and individual character.

1418. Archbp. Chichele to Hen. V. Signs simply: your preest and bedeman.—Ellis, i. 1. 5.


1440. Agnes to Will. Paston. Inscribed: To my worshepful housbond W. Paston be this letter takyn. Dere housbond I recommaunde me to yow. Ends: The Holy Trinite have you in governaunce.—P. L. i. 38-9.

1442-5. Duke of Buckingham to Lord Beaumont. Ryght worshipful and with all my herte right enterly beloved brother, I recomaunde me to you, thenking right hastili your good brotherhode for your gode and gentill letters. I beseche the blissid Trinite preserve you in honor and prosperite. Your trewe and feithfull broder H. Bukingham.—P. L. i. 61-2.

1443. Margaret to fohn Paston. Ryth worchipful husbon, I recomande me to yow desyryng hertely to her of your wilfar. Almyth God have you in his kepyn and sende yow helth, Yorys M. Paston.—P. L. i. 48-9.

1444. James Gresham to Will. Paston. Please it your good Lordship to wete, &c. Ends: Wretyn right simply the Wednesday next to fore the Fest. By your most symple servaunt.—P. L. i. 50.

1444. Duchess of Norfolk to f. Paston. Ryght trusty and entirely welbeloved we grete you wel bertily as we kan . . . and siche agrement as, &c. . . . we shall duely performe yt with the myght of Jesu who haff you in his blurred keping.—P. L. i. 57.


1449. Marg. to John Paston. Wretyn at Norwych in hast, Be your gronyng Wyff.—i. 76-7.
1449. Same to same. No mor I wryte to 3ow atte this tyme. Your Markaryte Paston.—i. 42-3.
1449. Elis. Clare to J. Paston. No more I wrighte to 3ow at this tyme, but Holy Gost have 3ow in kepyng. Wretyn in hast on Seynt Peterys day be candel lyght, Be your Cosyn E. C.—P. L. i. 89-90.
1450. Will. Lomme to J. Paston. I prey you this bille may recomaunde me to mastrases your moder and wyfe. Wretyn yn gret hast at London.—P. L. i. 126.
1450. J. Gresham to ‘my Maister Whyte Esquyer’. After due recomendacion I recomaund me to yow.
1450. J. Paston to above. James Gresham, I pray you labour for the, &c. —i. 145.
1453. Agnes to J. Paston. Sone I grete you well and send you Godys blessyng and myn. Wretyn at Norwych . . . in gret hast, Be your moder A. Paston.—P. L. i. 259.
1454. Thomas Howes to J. Paston. I pray God kepe yow. Wryt at Castr hastily ij day of September, Your owne T. Howes.—P. L. i. 318.
1455. Sir J. Fastolf to Duke of Norfolk. Written at my pore place of Castre, Your humble man and servaunt.—P. L. i. 324.
1456. Archbp. Bourchier to Sir J. Fastolf. The blissid Trinitee have you everlastingly in His keping, Written in my manoir of Lamehith, Your feithfull and trew Th. Cant.—P. L. i. 382.
1456 (Nephew to uncle). H. Fylinglay to Sir J. Fastolf. Ryght worshipful unkell and my ryght good master, I recomaund me to yow wyth all my servys. And Sir, my brother Paston and I have, &c. . . . Your nevew and servaunt.—P. L. i. 397.
1458 (Daughter to her mother). Elig. Poynings to Agn. Paston. Right worshipful and my most entierly belovde moder, in the most lowly maner I recomaund me unto your gode moderhode. . . . And Jesu for his grete mercy save yow. By your humble daughter.—P. L. i. 434-5.
1481-4. Edm. Paston to his mother. 3our umble son and servaunt.—P. L. iii. 280.
1482. Margery Paston to her husband. No more to you at this tyme, Be your servaunt and bedewoman.—iii. 293.
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1485. Duke of Norfolk to J. Paston. Welbelovyd fren I cummaund me to yow.... I shall content you at your metyng with me, Yower lover J. Norfolk.—iii. 320.


1485. Duke of Suffolk to J. Paston. Ryght welbeloved we grete you well. ... Suffolk, yor frende.—iii. 324-5.

1490. Bp. of Durham to Sir John Paston. Ihe Xps. Ryght worthipful sire, and myne especial and of long tyme apprevyd, trusty and fethiful frende. I in myne hertyeste wyse recommaunde me un to you. ... Scribblyld in the moste haste, at my castel or manoir of Aucland the xxvij of Januay. Your own trewe luffer and frende John Dureseme.—iii. 363.

1490. Lumen Haryson to Sir J. Paston. Onerabyll and well be lovvd Knythe, I commend me on to your masterchepe and to my lady jowyr wyffe. ... No mor than God be wyth 30W, L. H. at 3ouyr comawndment.

1503. Q. Margaret of Scotland to her father Hen. VII. My moste dere lorde and fader in the most humble wyse that I can thynke I recommaunde me unto your Grace besechyng you off your dayly blessyngys. ... Wrytyn wyt the hand of your humble douter Margaret.—Ellis i. 1. 43.

Hen. VII to his Mother, the Countess of Richmond. Madam, my most enterely wilbeloved Lady and Moder ... with the hande of youre most humble and loyngne sone.—Ellis, i. 1. 43-5.

Margaret to Hen. VII. My oune suet and most deare kynge and all my worldly joy, yn as humble manner as y can thynke I recommand me to your Grace ... by your fethiful and trewe bedewoman, and humble modyr Margaret R.—Ellis, i. 1. 46.

1513. Q. Margaret of Scotland to Hen. VIII. Richt excellent, richt hie and mithy Prince, our derrist and best belovit Brothir. ... Your louyn systar Margaret.—Ellis, i. 1. 65. (The Queen evidently employed a Scottish Secretary.)

1515. Margaret to Wolsey. Yours Margaret R.—Ellis, i. 1. 131.

1515. Thos. Lord Howard, Lord Admiral, to Wolsey. My owne gode Master Awlmosner. ... Scrybeled in gret hast in the Mary Rose at Plymouth half o' after xj at night ... y* own Thomas Howard.

c. 1515. West Bp. of Ely to Wolsey. Myyne especiall good Lorde in my most humble wise I recommaund me to your Grace besechyng you to continue my gode Lorde, and I schall euer be as I am bounden your dayly bedeman. ... Yr chapelayn and bed man N I. Elien.

c. 1520. Archbp. Warham to Wolsey. Please it yo1 moost honorable Grace to understand. ... At your Graces commandement, Willm. Cantuar.—Ellis, iii. i. 230. Also : Euer, your own Willm. Cantuar.

Langland Bp. of Lincoln to Wolsey. My bownden duety mooste lowly remembrede unto Your good Grace. ... Yo* moste humble bedisman John Lincoln.—Ellis, iii. i. 248.

Cath. of Aragon to Princess Mary. Doughter, I pray you thinke not, &c. ... Your lovyng mother Katherine the Quene.

Archibald, E. of Angus. Addresses letter to Wolsey: To my lord Cardinalis grace of Ingland.—Ellis, iii. i. 291.

1521. Bp. Tunstal to Wolsey. Addresses letter:—to the most reverend fader in God and his most singler good Lorde Cardinal.—Ellis, iii. i. 273.

Ends a letter : By your Gracys most humble bedeman Cuthbert Tunstall.—Ellis, iii. i. 332.

1515 or 1521. Duke of Buckingham to Wolsey. Yorys to my power E. Bukynghain.

Gavin Douglas, Bp. of Dunkeld, to Wolsey. Zo* chaplan wy* his lawfull seruyse Gavin bishop of Dunkeld.—Ellis, iii. i. 294. Zo* humble servytor and Chaplein of Dunkeld.—Ellis, iii. i. 296. Zo* humble seruytor and dolorous Chaplen of Dunkeld.—Ellis, iii. i. 303.

Wolsey to Gardiner (afterwards Bp. of Winchester). Ends: Your assurjd
lover and bedysman T. Carlu Ebor.—Ellis, i. 2. 6. Again: Wryttyn hastely at Asher with the rude and shackying hand of your dayly bedysman and assuryd friend T. Carlu Ebor.

1532. Thos. Audley (Lord Keeper) to Cromwell. Yo\textsuperscript{r} assured to his litell po\textsuperscript{r} Thomas Audeley Custos Sigilli.

Edw. E. of Hertford (afterwards Lord Protector). Thus I comit you to God hoo send yo\textsuperscript{r} lordship as well to far as I would mi selfe . . . wi\textsuperscript{r} the hand of yo\textsuperscript{r} lordshepis assured E. Hertford.

Hen. VIII to Catherine Parr. No more to you at thys tymse swethart both for lacke off tymse and gret occupation off bysynes, sayngyng we pray you in our name our harte blessyngs to all our chyldren, and recommendations to our cousin Marget and the rest off the laddis and gentyll women and to our Consell alsoo. Wryttyn with the hand off your lovyng howsbande Henry R.—Ellis, i. 2. 130.

Princess Mary to Cromwell. Marye Princesse. Maister Cromwell I commende me to you.—Ellis, i. 2. 24.

Prince Edward to Catherine Parr. Most honorable and entirely beloued mother. . . . Your Grace, whom God have ever in his most blessed keping. Your louing sonne, E. Prince.—Ellis, i. 2. 131.

1547. Henry Radclyf, E. of Sussex, to his wife. Madame with most lovyng and hertie commendations.—Ellis, i. 2. 137.

Princess Elizabeth to Edw. VI. Your Maiesties humble sistar to com-maundement Elizabeth.—Ellis, i. 2. 146; Your Maiesties most humble sistar Elizabeth.—Ellis, i. 1. 148.

Princess Elizabeth to Lord Protector. Your assured frende to my litel power Elizabeth.—Ellis, i. 2. 158.

Edward VI to Lord Protector Somerset. Derest Uncle. . . . Your good neuew Edward.—Ellis, ii. i. 148.

Q. Mary to Lord Admiral Seymour. Your assured frende to my power Marye.—Ellis, i. 2. 153.

Princess Elizabeth to Q. Mary (on being ordered to the Tower). Your Highnes most faithful subjec that hath bine from the begining and wyl be to my ende, Elizabeth. (Transcr. of 1732).—Ellis, ii. 2. 257.

1553. Princess Elizabeth to the Lords of the Council. Your verye lovinge frende, Elizabeth.—Ellis, ii. 2. 213.


Queen Dowager to Lord Admiral Seymour. By her y\textsuperscript{r} ys and schalbe your humble true and lovyng wyffe durynge her lyf Kateryn the Quene.—Ellis, i. 2. 152.

Q. Mary to Marquis of Winchester. Your Mystresse assured Marye the Quene.—Ellis, ii. 2. 252.

Sir John Grey of Pyrgo to Sir William Cecil. It is a great while me thinkethe, Cowsin Cecil, since I sent unto you. . . . By your lovyng cousin and assured frynd John Grey.—Ellis, ii. 2. 73-4; Good cowyne Cecill. . . . By yo\textsuperscript{r} lovyng Cousine and assured pover frynd dowring lyfe John Grey.—Ellis, ii. 2. 276.

Lady Catherine Grey, Countess of Hertford, to Sir W. Cecil. Good cowyne Cecill. . . . Your assured frend and cowyne to my small power Katheryne Hartford.—Ellis, ii. 2. 278; Your poore cowyne and assured frend to my small power Katheryne Hartford.—Ellis, ii. 2. 287.

1564. Sir W. Cecil to Sir Thos. Smith. Your assured for ever W. Cecil.—Ellis, ii. 2. 295; Yours assured W. Cecil.—Ellis, ii. 2. 297; Your assured to command W. Cecil.—Ellis, ii. 2. 300.

1566. Duchess of Somerset to Sir W. Cecil. Good Mr\textsuperscript{r} Secretary, yf I have let you alone all thys whyle I pray you to thynke yt was to tary for my L. of Leycesters assistans. . . . I can nomore . . . and so do leave you to God Yo\textsuperscript{r} assured lovyng frynd Anne Somerset.—Ellis, ii. 2. 288.
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Christopher Jonson, Master of Winchester, to Sir W. Cecil. Right
honorable my duetie with all humblenesse consydered. . . . Your honours
most due to commande, Christopher Jonson.—Ellis, ii. 2. 313.

1569. Lady Stanhope to Sir W. Cecil. Right honorable, my humble
dewtie premised. . . . Your honors most humblie bound Anne Stanhope.—
Ellis, ii. 2. 324.

1574. Sir Philip Sidney to the E. of Leicester. Righte Honorable and my
singular good Lorde and Uncle. . . . Your L. most obedi. . . . Philip Sidney.
—Works, p. 345.

1576. Sir Philip Sidney to Sir Francis Walsingham. Righte Honorable
. . . I most humbly recommende my selfe unto yow, and leave yow to the
Eternals most happy protection. . . . Yours humbly at commawndement
Phillip Sidney.

1578. Sir Philip Sidney to Edward Molineux, Esq. (Secretary to Sir H.
Sidney). M" Molineux, Few words are best. My letters to my father have
come to the eyes of some. Neither can I condemn any but you. . . . (The
writer assures M. that if he reads any letter of his to his father 'without his
commandment or my consent, I will thrust my dagger into you. And trust
to it, for I speak it in earnest'. . . .) In the meantime farewell. From court
this last of May 1578, By me Philip Sidney.—p. 328.

1580. Sir Philip Sidney to his brother Robert. My dear Brother . . .

1582. Thomas Watson 'To the frendly Reader' (in Passionate Centurie of
Love). Courteous Reader . . . and so, for breuitie sake (I) aprubtlie make and
end ; committing the to God, and my worke to thy fauour. Thine as thou
art his, Thomas Watson.

Anne of Denmark to James I. Sir . . . So kissing your handes I remain
she that will ever love Yow best, Anna R.—Ellis, i. 3. 97.

c. 1585. Sir Philip to Walsingham. Sir . . . your loving cosin and frend.
In several letters to Walsingham Sidney signs 'your humble Son'.

1586. Wm. Webbe to Ma. (="Master") Edward Sulyard Esquire (Dedi-
catory Epistle to the Discourse of English Poetrie). May it please you Syr,
ths once more to beare with my rudenes, &c. . . . I rest, Your worshippes
faithfull Servant W. W.

1593. Edward Alleyn to his wife. My good sweete mouse . . . and so
swett mouse farwell.—Mem. of Edw. Alleyn, i. 36; I my good sweetharte and
loving mouse . . . thyne ever and no bodies else by god of heaven.—ibid.

1596. Thos., Lord Buckhurst, afterwards Earl of Dorset, to Sir Robert

1597. Sir W. Raleigh to Cecil. St I humblie thanke yow for your letter . . .
St I pray love vs in your element and wee will love and honor yow in ours
and every wher. And remayne to be comanded by yow for evermore
W Raleigh.

1602. Same to same. Good M' Secretary. . . . Thus. I rest, your very
loving and assured frend T. Buckhurst.—Works, xxxiv-xi.

1603. Same to same. My very good Lord. . . . So I rest as you know,
Ever yours T. Buckhurst.

1605. Same to same. . . . I pray God for your health and for mine own
and so rest Ever yours . . .

1607. Same to the University of Oxford. Your very loving friend and
Chancellor T. Dorset.—xlvi.

c. 1608. Sir Henry Wotton to Henry Prince of Wales. YOure zealos
poore servant H. W.—Ellis, i. 3. 100.

Q. Anne of Denmark to Sir George Villiers (afterwards Duke of Buc-
kingham). My kind Dog. . . . So wishing you all happiness Anna R.—
Ellis, i. 3. 100.
1611. Charles Duke of York to Prince Henry. Most loving Brother I long to see you . . . Your H. most loving brother and obedient servant, Charles.—Ellis, i. 3. 96.

1612. Prince Charles to James I. Your Mostie most humble and most obedient sone and servant Charles.—Ellis, i. 3. 102.

Same to Villiers. Steenie, There is none that knowes me so well as your self . . . Your treu and constant loving frend Charles P.—Ellis, i. 3. 104.

King James to Buckingham or to Prince Charles. My onlie sweete and deare chylde I pray thee haiste thee home to thy deare dade by sunne setting at the furthest.—Ellis, i. 3. 120.

Same to Buckingham. My Steenie . . . Your dear dade, gosseppe and stewartede.—Ellis, i. 3. 159.

Same to both. Sweet Boyes . . . God blesse you both my sweete babes, and sende you a safe and happie returne, James R.—Ellis, i. 3. 121.

Prince Charles and Buckingham to James. Your Majesties most humble and obedient sone and servant Charles, and your humble slave and doge Steenie.—Ellis, i. 3. 122.

1623. Buckingham to James. Dere Dad, Gossoppe and Steward . . . . Your Majestyes most humble slave and doge Steenie.—Ellis, i. 3. 146-7.

1623. Lord Herbert to James. Your Sacred Majesties most obedient, most loyal, and most affectionate subjecte and servant, E. Herbert.

The letters of Sir John Suckling (Works, ii, Reeves & Turner) are mostly undated, but one to Davenant has the date 1629, and another to Sir Henry Vane that of 1632.

The general style is more modern in tone than those of any of the letters so far referred to. (See on Suckling's style, pp. 152-3.) The beginnings and endings, too, closely resemble and are sometimes identical with those of our own time.

To Davenant, Vane, and several other persons of both sexes, Suckling signs simply—'Your humble servant J. S.', or 'J. Suckling'. At least two, to a lady, end 'Your humbest servant'. The letter to Davenant begins 'Will'; that to Vane—'Right Honorable'. Several letters begin 'Madam', 'My Lord', one begins 'My noble friend', another 'My Noble Lord', several simply 'Sir'. The more fanciful letters, to Aglaura, begin 'Dear Princess', 'Fair Princess', 'My dear Dear', 'When I consider, my dear Princess', &c. One to a cousin begins 'Honest Charles'.

The habit of rounding off the concluding sentence of a letter so that the valedictory formula and the writer's name form an organic part of it, a habit very common in the eighteenth century—in Miss Burney, for instance—is found in Suckling's letters. For example: 'I am still the humble servant of my Lord — that I was, and when I cease to be so, I must cease to be John Suckling'; 'yet could never think myself unfortunate, while I can write myself Aglaura her humble servant'; 'and should you leave that lodging, more wretched than Montferrat needs must be your humble servant J. S.', and so on.

The longwindedness and prolixity which generally distinguish the openings and closings of letters of the fifteenth and the greater part of the sixteenth century, begin to disappear before the end of the latter period. Suckling is as neat and concise as the letter-writers of the eighteenth century. 'Madam, your most humble and faithful servant' might serve for Dr. Johnson.
Most of our modern formulas were in use before the end of the first half of the seventeenth century, though some of the older phrases still survive. But we no longer find ‘I commend me unto your good master­ship, beseeching the Blessed Trinity to have you in his governance’, and such-like lengthy introductions. The Correspondence of Dr. Basire (see pp. 163–4) is very instructive, as it covers the period from 1634 to 1675, by which latter date letters have practically reached their modern form. Dr. Basire writes in 1635–6 to Miss Frances Corbet, his fiancée, ‘Deare Fanny’, ‘Deare Love’, ‘Love’, and ends ‘Your most faithfull frend J. B.’, ‘Thy faithful frend and loving servaunt J. B.’, ‘Your assured frend and loving well-wisher J. B.’, ‘Your ever loving frend J. B.’ When Miss Corbet has become his wife, he constantly writes to her in his exile which lasted from 1640 to 1661, letters which apart from our present purpose possess great human and historical interest. These letters generally begin ‘My Dearest’, and ‘My deare Heart’, and he signs himself ‘Your very louing husband’, ‘Yours, more than ever’, ‘Your faithful husband’, ‘My dearest, Your faithful friend’, ‘Yours till death’, ‘Meanwhile assure your selfe of the constant love of—My dearest—Your loyall husband’.

The lady to whom these affectionate letters were addressed, bore with wonderful patience and cheerfulness the anxieties and sufferings incident upon a state bordering on absolute want caused by her husband's deprivation of his living under the Commonwealth, his prolonged absence, together with the cares of a family of young children, and very indifferent health. She was a woman of great piety, and in her letters ‘many a holy text around she strews’ in reply to the religious soliloquies of her husband. Her letters all begin ‘My dearest’, and they often begin and close with pious exclamations and phrases—‘Yours as much as euer in the Lord, No, more thene euer’; ‘My dearest, I shall not faile to looke thos plases in the criptur, and pray for you as becometh your obedient wif and serunct in the Lord F. B.’; another letter is headed ‘Jesu!’; and ends—’I pray God send vs all a happy meting, I ham your faithful in the Lord, F. B.’; another letter is headed ‘Jesu!’; and ends—’I pray God send vs all a happy meting, I ham your faithful in the Lord, F. B.’

Many of the letters are headed with the Sacred Name. Others of Mrs. Basire’s letters end—‘Farwall my dearest, I ham yours faithful for euer’; ‘I euer remine Yours faithfull in the Lord’. Many of the letters begin with the Sacred Name. Others of Mrs. Basire’s letters end—‘Farwall my dearest, I ham yours faithful for euer’; ‘I euer remine Yours faithfull in the Lord’; ‘So with my dayly prayers to God for you, I desire to remene your faithfull loveing and obedient wif’.

It may be worth while to give a few examples of beginnings and ends of letters from other persons in the Basire Correspondence, to illustrate the usage of the latter part of the seventeenth century.

These letters mostly bear, in the nature of an address, long superscriptions such as ‘To the Reverend and ever Honoured Doctour Basire, Prebendary of the Cathedral Church in Durham. To be recommended to the Postmaster of Darneton’ (p. 213, dated 1662).

This letter, from Prebendary Wrench of Durham, begins ‘Sir’, and ends—‘Sir, Your faithfull and unfeigned humble Servant R. W.’.

In the same year the Bishop of St. David’s begins a letter to Dr. Basire —‘Sir’, and ends—‘Sir, youre uerie sincere friend and servuant, Wil. St. David’s’, p. 219.

The Doctor’s son begins—‘Reverend Sir, and most loving Father’, and ends with the same formula, adding—‘Your very obedient Son, P. B.’.
p. 221. To his Bishop (of Durham) Dr. Basire begins ‘Right Rev. Father in God, and my very good Lord’, ending ‘I am still, My Ld, Your Lw. faithfull Servant Isaac Basire’. In 1666 the Bishop of Carlisle, Dr. Rainbow, evidently an old friend of Dr. B.’s, begins ‘Good Mr. Archdeacon’, and ends ‘I commend you and yours to God’s grace and remaine, Your very faithfull friend Edw. Carlil’, p. 254.

In 1668 the Bishop of Durham begins ‘Mr Archdeacon’ and ends ‘In the interim I shall not be wanting at this distance to doe all I can, who am, Sir, Your very loving friend and servant Jo. Duresme’, p. 273. Dr. Barlow, Provost of Queen’s, begins ‘My Reverend Friend’, and ends ‘Your prayers are desired for, Sir, Your affectionate friend and Servant, Tho. Barlow’, p. 302 (1673). Dr. Basire begins a letter to this gentleman—‘Rev. Sir and my Dear Friend’... ending ‘I remain, Reverend Sir, Your affectionate friend, and faithful servant’. To his son Isaac, he writes in 1664—‘Beloved Son’, ending—‘So prays your very loving and painfull Father, Isaac Basire’.

Having now brought our examples of the various types of epistolary formulas down to within measurable distance of our own practice, we must leave this branch of our subject. Space forbids us to examine and illustrate here the letters of the eighteenth century, but this is the less necessary as these are very generally accessible. The letters of that age, formal or intimate, but always so courteous in their formulas, are known to most readers. Some allusion has already been made (pp. 20–1) to the tinge of ceremoniousness in address, even among friends, which survives far into the eighteenth century, and may be seen in the letters of Lady Mary Montagu, of Gray, and Horace Walpole, while as late as the end of the century we find in the letters of Cowper, unsurpassed perhaps among this kind of literature for grace and charm, that combination of stateliness with intimacy which has now long passed away.

Exclamations, Expletives, Oaths, &c.

Under these heads comes a wide range of expressions, from such as are mere exclamations with little or no meaning for him who utters or for him who hears them, or words and phrases added, by way of emphasis, to an assertion, to others of a more formidable character which are deliberately uttered as an expression of spleen, disappointment, or rage, with a definitely blasphemous or injurious intention. In an age like ours, where good breeding, as a rule, permits only exclamations of the mildest and most meaningless kind, to express temporary annoyance, disgust, surprise, or pleasure, the more full-blooded utterances of a former age are apt to strike us as excessive. Exclamations which to those who used them meant no more than ‘By Jove’ or ‘my word’ do to us, would now, if they were revived appear almost like rather blasphemous irreverence. It must be recognized, however, that swearing, from its mildest to its most outrageous forms, has its own fashions. These vary from age to age and from class to class. In every age there are expressions which are permissible among well-bred people, and others which are not. In certain circles an expression may be regarded with dislike, not so
much because of any intrinsic wickedness attributed to it, as merely because it is vulgar. Thus there are many sections of society at the present time where such an expression as 'O Crikey' is not in use. No one would now pretend that in its present form, whatever may underlie it, this exclamation is peculiarly blasphemous, but many persons would regard it with disfavour as being merely rather silly and distinctly vulgar. It is not a gentleman's expression. On the other hand, 'Good Heavens', or 'Good Gracious', while equally innocuous in meaning and intention, would pass muster perhaps, except among those who object, as many do, to anything more forcible than 'dear me'.

Human nature, even when most restrained, seems occasionally to require some meaningless phrase to relieve its sudden emotions, and the more devoid of all association with the cause of the emotion the better will the exclamation serve its purpose. Thus some find solace in such a formula as 'O my little hat!' which has the advantage of being neither particularly funny nor of overstepping the limits of the nicest decorum, unless indeed these be passed by the mere act of expressing any emotion at all. It is really quite beside the mark to point out that utterances of this kind are senseless. It is of the very essence of such outbursts—the mere bubbles on the fountain of feeling—that they are quite unrelated to any definite situation. There is a certain adjective, most offensive to polite ears, which plays apparently the chief rôle in the vocabulary of large sections of the community. It seems to argue a certain poverty of linguistic resource when we find that this word is used by the same speakers both to mean absolutely nothing—being placed before every noun, and often adverbially before all adjectives—and also to mean a great deal—everything indeed that is unpleasant in the highest degree. It is rather a curious fact that the word in question while always impossible, except perhaps when used as it were in inverted commas, in such a way that the speaker dissociates himself from all responsibility for, or proprietorship in it, would be felt to be rather more than ordinarily intolerable, if it were used by an otherwise polite speaker as an absolutely meaningless adjective prefixed at random to most of the nouns in a sentence, and worse than if it were used deliberately, with a settled and full intent. There is something very terrible in an oath torn from its proper home and suddenly implanted in the wrong social atmosphere. In these circumstances the alien form is endowed by the hearers with mysterious and uncanny meanings; it chills the blood and raises gooseflesh.

We do not propose here to penetrate into the sombre history of blasphemy proper, nor to exhibit the development through the last few centuries of the ever-changing fashions of profanity. At every period there has been, as Chaucer knew—

a companye
Of yonge folk, that haunteden folye,
As ryot, hasard, stewes and tavernes,
Wher-as with harpes, lutes and giternes,
They daunce and pleye at dees both day and night,
And ete also and drinken over hir might,
Thurgh which they doon the devel sacrifyse
Within the develes tempel in cursed wyse,
By superfuitee abominable;
We are concerned, for the most part, with the milder sort of expressions which serve to decorate discourse, without symbolizing any strong feeling on the part of those who utter them. Some of the expletives which in former ages were used upon the slightest occasion, would certainly appear unnecessarily forcible for mere exclamations at the present day, and the fact that such expressions were formerly used so lightly, and with no blasphemous intention, shows how frequent must have been their employment for familiarity to have robbed them of all meaning.

So saintly a person as Sir Thomas More was accustomed, according to the reports given of his conversation by his son-in-law, to make use of such formulas as a God's name, p. xvi; would to God, ibid.; in good faith, xxviii, but compared with some of the other personages mentioned in his Life, he is very sparing of such phrases. The Duke of Norfolk, 'his singular deare friend', coming to dine with Sir Thomas on one occasion, 'fortuned to find him at Church singinge in the quiere with a surplas on his backe; to whome after service, as the(y) went home together arme in arme, the duke said, "God body, God body, My lord Chauncellor, a parish Clark, a parish Clarke!"'

On another occasion the same Duke said to him 'By the Masse, Mr Moore, it is perillous strivinge with Princes ... for by God's body, Mr Moore, Indignatio principis mors est', p. xxxix. In the conversation in prison, with his wife, quoted above, p. 364, we find that the good gentlewoman 'after her accustomed fashion' gives vent to such exclamations as 'What the good yeare Mr Moore': 'Tille vallle, tille vallle'; 'Bone deus, bone Deus man', 'I muse what a God's name you meane here thus fondly to tarry'. At the trial of Sir Thomas More, the Lord Chief Justice swears by St. Julian—'that was ever his oath', p. li.

'Tilly-fally, Sir John, ne'er tell me', and 'What the good year!' are both also said by Mrs. Quickly in Henry IV, Pt. II, ii. 4. Marry, which means no more than 'indeed', was a universally used expletive in the sixteenth century. Roper uses it in speaking to More, Wolsey uses it, according to Cavendish; it is frequent in Roister Doister, and is constantly in the mouths of Sir John Falstaff and his merry companions. By sweete Sanct Anne, by cocke, by gog, by cockes precious potstick, kocks nownes, by the armes of Calys, and the more formidable by the passion of God Sir do not so, all occur in Roister Doister, and further such exclamations as O Lorde, hoigh dagh I, I dare sweare, I shall so God me saue, I make God a vow (also written avow), would Christ I had, &c. Meaningless imprecations like the Devil take me, a mischiefe take his token and him and thee too are sprinkled about the dialogue of this play. The later plays of the great period offer a mine of material of this kind, but only a few can be mentioned here. What a Devil (instead of the Devil), what a pox, by'r lady, s'ounds, s'blood, God's body, by the mass, a plague on thee, are among the expressions in the First Part of Henry IV. In the Second
Part Mr. Justice Shallow swears by cock and pie. By the side of these are mild formulas such as I'm a few else, I'm a rogue if I drink today.

In Chapman's comedies there is a rich sprinkling both of the slighter forms of exclamatory phrases, as well as of the more serious kind. Of the former we may note y faith, bir lord, bir lady, by the Lord, How the divell (instead of how a devil), all in A Humorous Day's Mirth; il be sworne, All Foolies; of the latter kind of expression Gods precious soles, H. D. M.; s'foot, s'bodie, God's my life, Mons. D'Olive; Gods my passion, H. D. M.; swounds, swoundes, Gentleman Usher.'

Massinger's New Way to pay old Debts has 'slight, 'sdeath, and a fore­shadowing of the form of asseveration so common in the later seventeenth century in the phrase— 'If I know the mystery ... may I perish', ii. 2.

It is to the dramatists of the later seventeenth and early eighteenth century that the curious inquirer will go for expletives and exclamatory expressions of the greatest variety. Otway, Congreve, and Vanbrugh appear to excel all their predecessors and contemporaries in the fertility of their invention in this respect. It is indeed probable that while some of the sayings of Mr. Caper, my Lady Squeamish, my Lady Plyant, my Lord Foppington, and others of their kidney, are the creations of the writers who call these 'strange pleasant creatures' into existence, many others were actually current coin among the fops and fine ladies of the period. Even if many phrases used by these characters are artificial concoctions of the dramatists they nevertheless are in keeping with, and express the spirit and manners of the age. If Mr. Galsworthy or Mr. Bernard Shaw were to invent corresponding slang at the present day, it would be very different from that of the so-called Restoration Dramatists. The bulk of the following selection of expletives and oaths is taken from the plays of Otway, Congreve, Wycherley, Mrs. Aphra Behn, Vanbrugh, and Farquhar. A few occur in Shadwell, and many more are common to all writers of comedies. These are undoubtedly genuine current expressions some of which survive.

Among the more racy and amusing are:—

Let me die: 'Let me die your Ladyship obliges me beyond expression' (Mr. Saunter in Otway's Friendship in Fashion); 'Let me die, you have a great deal of wit' (Lady Froth, Congreve's Double Dealer); also much used by Melantha, an affected lady in Dryden's Marriage à la Mode.

Let me perish—'I'm your humble servant let me perish' (Brisk, Double Dealer); also used by Wycherley, Love in a Wood.

Strike me speechless.—Lord Foppington (Vanbrugh's Relapse).

Death and eternal tortures Sir, I vow the packet's (= pocket) too high (Lord Foppington).

Burn me if I do (Farquhar, Way to win him).

Rat me, 'rat my packet handkerchief (Lord Foppington).

Never stir—'Never stir if it did not' (Caper, Otway, Friendship in Love); 'Thou shalt enjoy me always, dear, dear friend, never stir'.

I'll take my death you're handsomer ' (Mrs. Millamont, Congreve, Way of the World).

As I'm a Person (Lady Wishfort, Way of the World).
**COLLOQUIAL IDIOM**

*Slap my vitals* (Lord Foppington; very frequent).  
*Split my windpipe*—Lord Foppington gives his brother his blessing, on finding that the latter has married by a trick the lady he had designed for himself—You have married a woman beautiful in her person, charming in her airs, prudent in her conduct, constant in her inclinations, and of a nice mariality split my windpipe’.  

*As I hope to breathe* (Lady Lurewell, Farquhar, Sir Harry Wildair).  
*I'm a Dog if do* (Wittmore in Mrs. Behn’s Sir Patient Fancy).  
*By the Universe* (Wycherley, Country Wife).  
*I swear and declare* (Lady Plyant); *I swear and vow* (Sir Paul Plyant, Double Dealer); *I do protest and vow* (Sir Credulous Easy, Aphra Behn’s Sir Patient Fancy); *I protest I swoon at ceremony* (Lady Fancyfull, Vanbrugh, Provok’d Wife); *I profess ingenuously a very discreet young man* (Mrs. Aphra Behn, Sir Patient Fancy).  

*Gads my life* (Lady Plyant).  
*O Crime* (Lady Plyant).  
*O Jeminy* (Wycherley, Mrs. Pinchwife, Country Wife).  
*Gad take me, between you and I, I was deaf on both ears for three weeks after* (Sir Humphrey, Shadwell, Bury Fair).  
*I'll lay my Life he deserves your assistance* (Mrs. Sullen, Farquhar, Beaux’ Stratagem).  

*By the Lord Harry* (Sir Jos. Wittol, Congreve, Old Bachelor).  
*By the universe* (Wycherley, Mrs. Pinchwife, Country Wife).  
*Gadzooks* (Heartfree, Vanbrugh, Provok’d Wife); *Gad’s Bud* (Sir Paul Plyant, Double Dealer); *Gud soons* (Lady Arabella, Vanbrugh, Journey to London); *Marry-gep* (Widow Blackacre, Wycherley, Plain Dealer); *’sheart* (Sir Wilful, Congreve, Way of the World); *Eh Gud, eh Gud* (Mrs. Fantast, Shadwell, Bury Fair); *Zoz I was a modest fool; adzoz* (Sir Credulous Easy, Devonshire Knight, Aphra Behn, Sir Petulant Fancy); ’*D’s diggers Sir* (a groom in Sir Petulant Fancy); *’sheart* (Sir Wil. Witwoud, Congreve, Way of the World); *odsheart* (Sir Jos. Wittol, Congreve, Old Bachelor); *Gadswouns* (Oldfox, Plain Dealer).  

By the side of marry, frequent in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the curious expression *Marry come up my dirty cousin* occurs in Swift’s Polite Conversations (said by the young lady), and again in Fielding’s Tom Jones—said by the lady’s maid Mrs. Honor. With this compare marry gep above, which probably stands for ‘go up’.  

Such expressions as Lard are frequent in the seventeenth-century comedies, and the very modern-sounding as sure as a gun is said by Sir Paul Plyant in the Double Dealer.  

The comedies of Dryden contain but few of the more or less mild, and fashionable, semi-bantering exclamatory expressions which enliven the pages of many of his contemporaries; he sticks on the whole to the more permanent oaths—’*death*, *sblood*, &c. It must be allowed that the dialogue of Dryden’s comedies is inferior to that of Otway or Congreve in brilliancy and natural ease, and that it probably does not reflect the familiar colloquial English of the period so faithfully as the conversation in the works of these writers. Dryden himself says, in the Defense of the Essay of Dramatic Poesy, ‘I know I am not so fitted by Nature to
write Comedy: I want that Gaiety of Humour which is required to it. My Conversation is slow and dull, my Humour Saturnine and reserv'd: In short, I am none of those who endeavour to break all Jests in Company, or make Repartees'.

It may be noted that the frequent use—almost in every sentence—of such phrases as let me perish, burn me, and other meaningless interjections of this order, is attributed by the dramatists only to the most frivolous fops and the most affected women of fashion. The more serious characters, so far as such exist in the later seventeenth-century comedies, are addicted rather to the weightier and more sober sort of swearing. It is perhaps unnecessary to pursue this subject beyond the first third of the eighteenth century. Farquhar has many of the mannerisms of his slightly older contemporaries, and some stronger expressions, e.g. 'There was a neighbour's daughter I had a woundy kindness for', Truman, in Twin Rivals; but Fielding in his numerous comedies has but few of the objurgatory catchwords of the earlier generation. Swearing, both of the lighter kind as well as of the deliberately profane variety, appears to have diminished in intensity, apart from the stage country squire, such as Squire Badger in Don Quixote, who says 'Shodlickins and ecod, and Squire Western, whose artless profanity is notorious. Ladies in these plays, and in Swift's Polite Conversations, still say lard, O Lud, and la, and mercy, 'sbubs, God bless my eyesight, but the rich variety of expression which we find in Lady Squeamish and her friends has vanished. Some few of the old mouth-filling oaths, such as zounds, 'sdeath, and so on, still linger in Goldsmith and Sheridan, but the number of these available for a gentleman was very limited by the end of the century. From the beginning of the nineteenth century it would seem that nearly all the old oaths died out in good society, as having come to be considered, from unfamiliarity, either too profane or else too devoid of content to serve any purpose. It seems to be the case that the serious oaths survive longest, or at any rate die hardest, while each age produces its own ephemeral formulas of mere light expletive and asseveration.

Hyperbole; Compliments; Approval; Disapproval; Abuse, &c.

Very characteristic of a particular age is the language of hyperbole and exaggeration as found in phrases expressive on the one hand of compliments, pleasure, approval, amusement, and so on, and of disgust, dislike, anger, and kindred emotions, on the other. Incidentally, the study of the different modes of expressing such feelings as these leads us also to observe the varying fashion in intensives, corresponding to the present-day awfully, frightfully, and the rest, and in exaggeration generally, especially in paying compliments.

The following illustrations are chiefly drawn from the seventeenth century, which offers a considerable wealth of material.

It is wonderful what a variety of expressions have been in use, more or less transitorily, at different periods, as intensives, meaning no more than very, very much, &c. Rarely in Chapman's Gentleman Usher—'How did you like me aunt? O rarely, rarely', 'Oh lord, that, that is
a pleasure intolerable', Lady Squeamish in Otway's Friendship in Love;

'Let me die if that was not extravagantly pleasant (= very amusing),

ibid.; 'I vow he himself sings a tune extreme prettily', ibid.; 'I love
dancing immoderately', ibid.; 'O dear 'tis violent hot', ibid.; 'Deuce take
me if your Ladyship has not the art of surprising the most naturally in
the world—I hope you'll make me happy in communicating the Poem',
Brisk in Congreve's Double Dealer; 'With the reserve of my Honour, I
assure you Mr Careless, I don't know anything in the World I would
refuse to a Person so meritorious—You'll pardon my want of expression',
Lady Plyant in Double Dealer; to which Careless replies—'O your
Ladyship is abounding in all Excellence, particularly that of Phrase; My
Lady Froth is very well in her Accomplishments—but it is when my
Lady Plyant is not thought of—if that can ever be'; Lady Plyant:

'O you overcome me—That is so excessive'; Brisk, asked to write notes
to Lady Froth's Poems, cries 'With all my Heart and Soul, and proud of
the vast Honour let me perish'. 'I swear Mr Careless you are very
alluring, and say so many fine Things, and nothing is so moving as a fine
Thing.... Well, sure if I escape your Importunities, I shall value myself
as long as I live, I swear; Lady Plyant. The following bit of dialogue
between Lady Froth and Mr. Brisk illustrates the fashionable mode of
bandying exaggerated, but rather hollow compliments.

'Ldy F. Ah Gallantry to the last degree—Mr Brisk was ever anything so
well bred as My Lord? Brisk—Never anything but your Ladyship let me
perish. Ldy F. O prettyly turned again; let me die but you have a great
deal of Wit. Mr Mellefont don't you think Mr Brisk has a World of Wit?
Mellefont—O yes Madam. Brisk—O dear Madam—Ldy F. An infinite
deal! Brisk. O Heaven Madam. Ldy F. More Wit—than Body. Brisk—I'm everlastingly your humble Servant, deuce take me Madam."

Lady Fancyful in Vanbrugh's Provok'd Wife contrives to pay herself
a pretty compliment in lamenting the ravages of her beauty and the con-
sequent pretended annoyance to herself—'To confess the truth to you,
I'm so everlasting fatigued with the addresses of unfortunate gentlemen
that were it not for the extravagancy of the example, I should e'en tear
out these wicked eyes with my own fingers, to make both myself and
mankind easy'.

Swift's Polite Conversations consist of a wonderful string of slang
words, phrases, and clichés, all of which we may suppose to have been
current in the conversation of the more frivolous part of Society in the
early eighteenth century. The word pure is used for very—'this almond
pudding is pure good'; also as an Adj., in the sense of excellent, as in 'by
Dad he's pure Company', Sir Noble Clumsey's summing-up of the 'Arch-
Wag' Malagene. To divert in the characteristic sense of 'amuse',
and instead of this—'Well ladies and gentlemen, you are pleased to divert
yourselves'. Lady Wentworth in 1706 speaks of her 'munckey' as
'full of devertin tricks', and twenty years earlier Cary Stewkley (Verney),
taxed by her brother with a propensity for gambling, writes 'whot dus
becom a gentilwoman as plays only for divartion I hope I know'.

The idiomatic use of obliging is shown in the Polite Conversations, by
Lady Smart, who remarks, in answer to rather excessive praise of her
house—'My lord, your lordship is always very obliging'; in the same
sense Lady Squeamish says 'I sweare Mr. Malagene you are a very obliging person'.

Extreme amusement, and approval of the persons who provoke it, are frequently expressed with considerable exaggeration of phrase. Some instances are quoted above, but a few more may be added. 'A you mad slave you, you are a tickling Actor', says Vincentio to Pogio in Chapman's Gentleman Usher.

Mr. Oldwit, in Shadwell's Bury Fair, professes great delight at the buffoonery of Sir Humphrey:—'Forbear, pray forbear; you'll be the death of me; I shall break a vein if I keep you company, you arch Wag you... Well Sir Humphrey Noddy, go thy ways, thou art the archest Wit and Wag. I must forswear thy Company, thou'll kill me else,' The arch wag asks 'What is the World worth without Wit and Waggery and Mirth?', and describing some prank he had played before an admiring friend, remarks—'If you'd seen his Lordship laugh! I thought my Lord would have killed himself. He desired me at last to forbear; he was not able to endure it.' 'Why what a notable Wag's this' is said sarcastically in Mrs. Aphra Behn's Sir Patient Fancy.

The passages quoted above, pp. 369-71, from Otway's Friendship in Love illustrate the modes of expressing an appreciation of 'Waggery'.

In the tract Reasons of Mr. Bays for changing his religion (1688), Mr. Bays (Dryden) remarks à propos of something he intends to write—'you'll half kill yourselves with laughing at the conceit', and again 'I protest Mr Crites you are enough to make anybody split with laughing'. Similarly 'Miss' in Polite Conversation declares—'Well, I swear you'll make one die with laughing'.

The language of abuse, disparagement, contempt, and disapproval, whether real or in the nature of banter, is equally characteristic.

The following is uttered with genuine anger, by Malagene Goodvile in Otway's Friendship in Love, to the musicians who are entertaining the company—'Hold, hold, what insufferable rascals are these? Why you scurvy thrashing scraping mongrels, ye make a worse noise than crampt hedgehogs. 'Sdeath ye dogs, can't you play more as a gentleman sings?'

The seventeenth-century beaux and fine ladies were adepts in the art of backbiting, and of conveying in a few words a most unpleasant picture of an absent friend—'O my Lady Toothless' cries Mr. Brisk in the Double Dealer, 'O she's a mortifying spectacle, she's always chewing the cud like an old Ewe'; 'Fie Mr Brisk, Eringos for her cough', protests Cynthia; Lady Froth:—'Then that t'other great strapping Lady—I can't hit of her name; the old fat fool that paints so exorbitantly'; Brisk:—'I know whom you mean—But deuce take me I can't hit of her Name neither—Paints d'ye say? Why she lays it on with a trowel.'

Mr. Brisk knows well how to 'just hint a fault'—'Don't you apprehend me My Lord? Careless is a very honest fellow, but harkee—you understand me—somewhat heavy, a little shallow or so'.

Lady Froth has a picturesque vocabulary to express disapproval—'O Filthy Mr Sneer? he's a nauseous figure, a most fulsamic Fop'. Nauseous and filthy are favourite words in this period, but are often used so as to convey little or no specific meaning, or in a tone of rather affectionate
banter. 'He's one of those nauseous offerers at wit', Wycherley's Country Wife; 'A man must endeavour to look wholesome' says Lord Foppington in Vanbrugh's Relapse, 'lest he make so nauseous a figure in the side box, the ladies should be compelled to turn their eyes upon the Play'; again the same nobleman remarks 'While I was but a Knight I was a very nauseous fellow'; and, speaking to his tailor—'I shall never be reconciled to this nauseous packet'. A remarkable use of the verb, to express a simple aversion, is found in Mrs. Millamont's 'I nauseate walking; 'tis a country diversion' (Congreve, Way of the World).

In the Old Bachelor, Belinda, speaking of Belmour with whom she is in love, cries out, at the suggestion of such a possibility—'Filthy Fellow! ... Oh I love your hideous fancy! Ha, ha, ha, love a Man!' In the same play Lucy the maid calls her lover, Setter, 'Beast, filthy toad' during an exchange of civilities. 'Foh, you filthy toad! nay, now I've done jesting' says Mrs. Squeamish in the Country Wife, when Horner kisses her. 'Out upon you for a filthy creature' cries 'Miss' in the Polite Conversations, in reply to the graceful banter of Neverout.

Toad is a term of endearment among these ladies: 'I love to torment the confounded toad' says Lady Fidget, speaking of Mr. Horner for whom she has a very pronounced weakness. 'Get you gone you good-natur'd toad you' is Lady Squeamish's reply to the rather outré compliments of Sir Noble.

Plague (Vb.), plaguy, plaguily are favourite expressions in Polite Conversations. Lord Sparkish complains to his host—'My Lord, this venison is plaguily peppered'; 'Sumbs, Madam, I have burnt my hand with your plaguy kettle' says Neverout, and the Colonel observes, with satisfaction, that 'her Ladyship was plagiarly bamb'd'. 'Don't be so teasing; you plague a body so! can't you keep your filthy hands to yourself?' is a playful rap administered by 'Miss' to Neverout.

Strange is another word used very indefinitely but suggesting mild disapproval—'I vow you'll make me hate you if you talk so strangely, but let me die, I can't last longer' says Lady Squeamish, implying a certain degree of impropriety, which nevertheless makes her laugh; again, she says, 'I'll vow and swear my cousin Sir Noble is a strange pleasant creature'.

We have an example above of exorbitantly in the sense of 'outrageously', and the adjective is also used in the same sense—'Most exorbitant and amazing' is Lady Fantast's comment, in Bury Fair, upon her husband's outburst against her airs and graces. We may close this series of illustrations, which might be extended almost indefinitely, with two from the Verney Memoirs, which contain idiomatic uses that have long since disappeared. Susan Verney, wishing to say that her sister's husband is a bad-tempered disagreeable fellow, writes 'poore peg has married a very humersome cros boy as ever I see' (Mem. ii. 361; 1647). Edmund Verney, Sir Ralph's heir, having had a quarrel with a neighbouring squire concerning boundaries and rights of way, describes him as 'very malicious and stomachfull' (Mem. iv. 177, 1682). The phrase 'as ever I see' is common in the Verney letters, and also in the Wentworth Papers.
We close this chapter with some examples of seventeenth-century preciosity and euphemism. The most characteristic specimens of this kind of affected speech are put by the writers into the mouths of female characters, and of these we select Shadwell's Lady Fantast and her daughter (Bury Fair), Otway's Lady Squeamish, Congreve's Lady Wishfort, and Vanbrugh's Lady Fancyful in the Provok'd Wife. Some of the sayings of a few minor characters may be added; the waitingmaids of these characters are nearly as elegant, and only less absurd than their mistresses.

Luce, Lady Fantast's woman, summons the latter's stepdaughter as follows:—'Madam, my Lady Madam Fantast, having attir'd herself in her morning habiliments, is ambitious of the honour of your Ladyship's Company to survey the Fair'; and she thus announces to her mistress the coming of Mrs. Gertrude the stepdaughter:—'Madame, M'r Gatty will kiss your Ladyship's hands here incontinently'. The ladies Fantast, highly respectable as they are in conduct, are as arrant, pretentious, and affected minxes as can be found, in manner and speech, given to interlarding their conversation with sham French, and still more dubious Latin. Says the daughter—'To all that which the World calls Wit and Breeding, I have always had a natural Tendency, a penchen, derived, as the learned say, ex traduce, from your Ladyship: besides the great Prevalence of your Ladyship's most shining Example has perpetually stimulated me, to the sacrificing all my Endeavours towards the attaining of those inestimable Jewels; than which, nothing in the Universe can be so much a mon gre, as the French say. And for Beauty, Madam, the stock I am enrich'd with, comes by Emanation from your Ladyship, who has been long held a Paragon of Perfection: most Charnant, most Tuant.'

'Ah my dear Child' replies the old lady, 'I alas, alas! Time has been, and yet I am not quite gone'. . . . When Gertrude her stepsister, an attractive and sensible girl, comes in Mrs. Fantast greets her with 'Sweet Madam Gatty, I have some minutes impatiently expected your Arrival, that I might do myself the Great Honour to kiss your hands and enjoy the Favour of your Company into the Fair; which I see out of my Window, begins to fill apace.'

To this piece of affectation Gatty replies very sensibly, 'I got ready as soon as e'er I could, and am now come to wait on you', but old Lady Fantast takes her to task, with 'Oh, fie, Daughter! will you never attain to mine, and my dear Daughter's Examples, to a more polite way of Expression, and a nicer form of Breeding? Fie, fie; I come to wait on you! You should have said; I assure you Madam the Honour is all on my side; and I cannot be ambitious of a greater, than the sweet Society of so excellent a Person. This is Breeding.' 'Breeding!' exclaims Gatty, 'Why this had been a Flam, a meer Flam'. And with this judgement, we may leave My Lady Fantast.

We pass next to Lady Squeamish, who is rather ironically described by Goodvile as 'the most exact Observer of Decorums and Decency alive'. Her manner of greeting the ladies on entering, along with her cousin Sir Noble Clumsey, if it has the polish, has also the insincerity of her
age—‘Dear Madam Goodvile, ten thousand Happineses wait on you! Fair Madam Victoria, sweet charming Camilla, which way shall I express my Service to you?—Cousin your honour, your honour to the Ladies.—
Sir Noble:—Ladies as low as Knee can bend, or Head can bow, I salute you all: And Gallants, I am your most humble, most obliged, and most devoted Servant.’

The character of this charming lady, as well as her taste in language, is well exhibited in the following dialogue between her and Victoria.

‘Oh my dear Victoria! the most unlook’d for Happiness! the pleasant’st Accident! the strangest Discovery! the very thought of it were enough to cure Melancholy. Valentine and Camilla, Camilla and Valentine, ha, ha, ha,

Ldy Squ. Nay ’tis too precious to be communicated: Hold me, hold me, or I shall die with laughter—ha, ha, ha, Camilla and Valentine, Valentine and Camilla, ha, ha, ha—O dear, my Heart’s broke.

Vict. Good Madam refrain your Mirth a little, and let me know the Story, that I may have a share in it.

Ldy Squ. An Assignation, an Assignation tonight in the lower Garden;—by strong good Fortune I overheard it all just now—but to think of the pleasant Consequences that will happen, drives me into an Excess of Joy beyond all sufferance.

Vict. Madame in all probability the pleasant’st Consequence is like to be theirs, if any body’s; and I cannot guess how it should touch your Ladyship in the least.

Ldy Squ. O Lord, how can you be so dull? Why, at the very Hour and Place appointed will I greet Valentine in Camilla’s stead, before she can be there herself; then when she comes, expose her Infamy to the World, till I have thorowly revenged my self for all the base Injuries her Lover has done me.

Vict. But Madam, can you endure to be so malicious?

Ldy Squ. That, that’s the dear Pleasure of the thing; for I vow I’d sooner die ten thousand Deaths, if I thought I should hazard the least Temptation to the prejudice of my Honour.

Vict. But why should your Ladyship run into the mouth of Danger? Who knows what scurvy lurking Devil may stand in readiness, and seize your Virtue before you are aware of him?

Ldy Squ. Temptation? No, I’d have you know I scorn Temptation: I durst trust myself in a Convent amongst a Kennel of cramm’d Friers: Besides, that ungrateful ill-bred fellow Valentine is my mortal Aversion, more odious to me than foul weather on a May-day, or ill smell in a Morning. . . No, were I inclined to entertain Addresses, I assure you I need not want for Servants; for I swear I am so perplexed with Billet-Doux every day, I know not which way to turn myself: Besides there’s no Fidelity, no Honour in Mankind. O dear Victoria! whatever you do, never let Love come near your Heart: Tho really I think true Love is the greatest Pleasure in the World.’

And so we let Lady Squeamish go her ways for a brazen jilt, and an affected, humoursome baggage. If any one wishes to know whither her ways led her, let him read the play.

Only one more example of foppish refinement of speech from this play—the remarks of the whimsical Mr. Caper to Sir Noble Clumsey, who coming in drunk, takes him for a dancing-master—‘I thought you had known me’ says he, rather ruefully, but adds, brightening—‘I doubt
you may be a little overtaken. Faith, dear Heart, I'm glad to see you so merry!

The character of Lady Wishfort in the Way of the World is perhaps one of the best that Congreve has drawn; her conversation in spite of the deliberate affectation in phrase is vivid and racy, and for all its preciosity has a naturalness which puts it among the triumphs of Congreve's art. He contrives to bring out to the full the absurdity of the lady's mannerisms, in feeling and expression, to combine these with vigour and ease of diction, and to give to the whole that polish of which he is the unquestioned master in his own age and for long after.

The position of Lady Wishfort is that of an elderly lady of great outward propriety of conduct, and a steadfast observer of decorum, in speech no less than in manners. Her equanimity is considerably upset by the news that an elderly knight has fallen in love with her portrait, and wishes to press his suit with the original. The pretended knight is really a valet in disguise, and the whole intrigue has been planned, for reasons into which we need not enter here, by a rascally nephew of Lady Wishfort's. This, however, is not discovered until the lover has had an interview with the sighing fair. The first extract reveals the lady discussing the coming visit with Foible her maid (who is in the plot).

'I shall never recompose my Features to receive Sir Rowland with any Oeconomy of Face... I'm absolutely decayed. Look, Foible.

Foible. Your Ladyship has frown'd a little too rashly, indeed Madam. There are some Cracks discernible in the white Varnish.

Lady W. Let me see the Glass—Cracks say'st thou? Why I am arrantly flead (e. g. flayed)—I look like an old peel'd Wall. Thou must repair me Foible before Sir Rowland comes, or I shall never keep up to my picture.

F. I warrant you, Madam; a little Art once made your picture like you; and now a little of the same Art must make you like your Picture. Your Picture must sit for you, Madam.

Lady W. But art thou sure Sir Rowland will not fail to come? Or will he not fail when he does come? Will he be importunate, Foible, and push? For if he should not be importunate... I shall never break Decorums— I shall die with Confusion; if I am forc'd to advance—O no, I can never advance.... I shall swoon if he should expect Advances. No, I hope Sir Rowland is better bred than to put a Lady to the Necessity of breaking her Forms. I won't be too coy neither.—I won't give him Despair—But a little Disdain is not amiss; a little Scorn is alluring.—Foible.—A little Scorn becomes your Ladyship.—

Lady W. Yes, but Tenderness becomes me best.—A Sort of a Dyingness—You see that Picture has a Sort of a—Ha Foible!—A Swimmingness in the Eyes—Yes, I'll look so—My Neice affects it but she wants Features. Is Sir Rowland handsom? Let my Toilet be remov'd—I'll dress above. I'll receive Sir Rowland here. Is he handsom? Don't answer me. I won't know: I'll be surpris'd; He'll be taken by Surprize.—Foible—By Storm Madam. Sir Rowland's a brisk Man.—Lady W. Is he! O then he'll importune, if he's a brisk Man. I shall save Decorums if Sir Rowland importunes. I have a mortal Terror at the Apprehension of offending against Decorums. O I'm glad he's a brisk Man. Let my things be remov'd good Foible.'

The next passage reveals the lady ready dressed, and expectant of Sir Rowland's arrival.

—'Well, and how do I look Foible!—F. Most killing well, Madam. Lady W. Well, and how shall I receive him? In what Figure shall I give
his Heart the first Impression? There is a great deal in the first Impression. Shall I sit?—No, I won't sit—I'll walk—ay I'll walk from the door upon his Entrance; and then turn full upon him—No, that will be too sudden. I'll lie, ay I'll lie down—I'll receive him in my little Dressing-Room. There's a Couch—Yes, yes, I'll give the first Impression on a Couch—I won't lie neither, but loll, and lean upon one Elbow; with one Foot a little dangling off, jogging in a thoughtful Way—Yes—Yes—and then as soon as he appears, start, ay, start and be surpris'd, and rise to meet him in a pretty Disorder—Yes—O, nothing is more alluring than a Levee from a Couch in some Confusion—It shews the Foot to Advantage, and furnishes with Blushes and recomposing Airs beyond Comparison. Hark! there's a Coach.'

But it is when l'heure du Berger draws near, as she supposes, that Lady Wishfort rises to the sublimest heights of expression:—

'Well, Sir Rowland, you have the Way,—you are no Novice in the Labyrinth of Love—You have the Clue—But as I'm a Person, Sir Rowland, you must not attribute my yielding to any sinister Appetite, or Indigestion of Widowhood; nor impute my Complacency to any Lethargy of Continence—I hope you don't think me prone to any iteration of Nuptials—If you do, I protest I must recede—or think that I have made a Prostitution of Decorums, but in the Vehemence of Compassion, or to save the Life of a Person of so much Importance—Or else you wrong my Condescension—If you think the least Scruple of Carnality was an Ingredient, or that—'.

Here Foible enters and announces that the Dancers are ready, and thus puts an end to the scene at its supreme moment of beauty — and absurdity. Even Congreve could not remain at that level any longer.

It is worth while to record that in this play, a maid, well called Mincing, announces—'Mem, I am come to acquaint your Laship that Dinner is impatient'. The hostess invites her guests to go into dinner with the phrase—'Gentlemen, will you walk?'

This chapter and book cannot better conclude than with a typical piece of seventeenth-century formality. May it symbolize at once the author's leave-taking of the reader and the eagerness of the latter to pursue the subject for himself.

The passage is from the Provok'd Wife:—

'Lady Fancyful. Madam, your humble servant, I must take my leave.
Lady Brute. What, going already madam?
Lady F. I must beg you'll excuse me this once; for really I have eighteen visits this afternoon. . . . (Going) Nay, you shan't go one step out of the room.
Lady B. Indeed I'll wait upon you down.
Lady F. No, sweet Lady Brute, you know I swoon at ceremony.
Lady B. Pray give me leave—Lady F. You know I won't—Lady B.—You know I must.—Lady F.—Indeed you shan't—Indeed I will.—Indeed you shan't —Lady B.—Indeed I will.
Lady F. Indeed you shan't. Indeed, indeed, indeed, you shan't.'

[Exit running. They follow.]
APPENDIX I

P. 168.

Gill's Account of English 'Long a'.

Middle English a, in name, take, bacon, capon, &c., is regularly transcribed by Gill with the symbol a, the dots indicating length. 'This sound', says Gill, 'the Germans express by aa, as in maal 'feast', haar 'hair'. On the face of it one might suppose that Gill intended to assert that the English sound of this vowel in his day, or at any rate in his own pronunciation, was still the same as in M.E. Against this we have evidence which goes to show that one hundred and fifty years before Gill's time, at a modest estimate, M.E. a was fronted, and levelled under the sound of M.E. [ɛ]. See pp 194-196 above. If this be so, then Gill's statement is very misleading. His speech may, indeed, have been old-fashioned, after all, he was born in 1565, but it is going rather far to suppose that he himself still spoke M.E. Again, we know that Gill was in very many respects an accurate and candid observer, and it is incredible that he should have described as a back what was actually a front vowel. He certainly does not use these terms, nor even 'guttural and palatal', but he must have recognized the difference perfectly well. Let it be remembered that Gill distinguishes consistently between M.E. [ɛ] and [ɛ], writing ɛ for the former, and i for the latter; that long and short vowels are throughout his book accurately distinguished; that he recognizes the existence of syllabic -l, -r, -n; that he records the difference between stressed and unstressed forms of auxiliaries and personal pronouns; that in his examples of the pronunciation of the Mopsae he records what we know to have really existed, though we may think that Gill is pedantic in condemning as foppish and affected, what was actually pretty universally established in his time.

It appears to me far more probable that Gill was mistaken in regard to the quality of the German vowel in 'maal', &c., than that he should have been so totally deaf to the sound of the English vowel in name, &c., as his identification of the two vowels seems to suggest. Why, he actually makes his Mopsae pronounce M.E. ə as ē in Kép and Kémbrík. He himself prefers ā in these words. I suggest that Gill had the archaic pronunciation [ae] for old ā, that to him, as to all Englishmen of his day, [a] was an unknown sound, difficult to hear accurately, and to reproduce, and that he heard this unfamiliar vowel as [æ] his own sound, expressed by the same letter. Many Englishmen at the present time regularly substitute the short vowel [æ] for [a] when pronouncing French, German, Welsh, and so on. If Gill misheard, and mispronounced, German [a̯] as suggested, his identification of it with the English 'long a' was perfectly natural.

It is surprising enough that Gill should himself still have pronounced his ā as [ɛ], and this may have been due to some dialect influence, whether social or regional. We may perhaps conclude, if we accept the above interpretation of his symbol a, that his short a expressed [æ]. He distinguishes the strong and weak forms of have as 'hav' and 'hav' respectively, and there is nothing to show that the vowels differed otherwise than in quantity. It was impossible for one who was not a phonetician to describe [æ] whether long or short. Thirty years or so after Gill, Wallis put ā among the 'palatal' vowels, and it was not till thirty years later still that Cooper unequivocally describes this sound as a low front.

APPENDIX II

Various notes on Vowels of Stressed Syllables.

P. 194, line 13 from bottom.

Some regard the spelling credyll as suspect, and suggest that the e here is not for M.E. ā at all, but that it represents a M.E. ə. The ground for this is crædel which occurs in Promptorium (Norf. 1440), credil appears in Seven DD
Sages (c. 1425). The origin of ə here, from O.E. ǣ, is not very clear, if it be other than M.E. æ fronted.

P. 202.

Rounded Vowel in wrath.

Milton evidently used the same vowel as Cooper. In his autograph MS. (Ode on Circumcision 23), he first wrote wraauth, though he altered this to wrath, but in Morgan MS. in lines 54, 110, 220, where the scribe first wrote wrath, a subsequent corrector has inserted u. Miss Darbishire says the spelling wraauth has been preserved by the printer in nearly every other place in P. L.

P. 223.

Variant Pronunciations of high and height.

The present form high [hai] goes back to M.E. high; the spelling height to a M.E. type with ei. The pronunciation of the latter has been influenced by that of high. Milton’s spelling highth (P. L. i. 92, 2, 82, &c.), shows the same influence, and no doubt expresses [hai] But a ME. heigh also existed, and would give Modern hey = [hei], cp. Heywood, &c. Price (1668) says that high and hay are pronounced alike; Mrs. Adams, Later Verney Letters, i. 3, writes—my rent I own is too hey for me (1697). Habington, Castara, 96 (1634), rhymes height—state; Cooper (1685) puts height and weight together; Dryden height—fate, also Dyer, Grongar Hill, 33–34 (1726); Baker (1725) says height is pronounced both ‘ hite’, and ‘ hail’. Thus both types of both words survived.

Note that the pronunciation of eye goes back to M.E. ēye, whereas the spelling is from M.E. ēye which would normally give Mod. [ei].

P. 230, line 19.

Diphthonging of M.E. ā in Northern English.

It is not quite accurate to say that no diphthonging has taken place in the Mod. Dialects of the North. H. Orton, Sith. Darh. Dialect, § 133, gives the regular isolative development of ā in Byers Green as [ou], as in [brōn, dōük, kōu, (h)ōus], &c., &c., for O.E. brūn, dūc ‘ duck’, că, hūs, &c. He regards this, however, as ‘ only a very recent ’ modification. One might indeed be inclined to regard the diphthonging in these words as an imitation of Standard English, were it not for [dawk], which shows the survival and development of long ā where Southern English has the shortened form. In § 387 Orton adduces forms to show at least the beginning of diphthonging in the dialects of Lorton, Kendal, and Stokesley. Thus Northern diphthonging of ā, such as it is, appears to be late, only incipient, and confined to a restricted area.

P. 239.

Pronunciation of Rome.

Swift rhymes this word with gloom, and Pope writes:—

From the same foes at last both felt their doom,
And the same Age saw Learning fall and Rome.

Ess. on Crit., 685.

Lady Gardiner has the inverted spelling in the rome of—Later V. Letters i, p. 110 (1702). Walker, Dictionary (4th Ed., 1806) says ‘ the o of this word seems irrevocably fixed in the English sound of the letter in move and prove’. Pp. 243, 244.

The Survival of the Sound [j] in English.

While many of the spellings quoted—youes, &c.—undoubtedly point to [jʊ] in such words as early as the sixteenth century, the statement of Voltaire should be noted. He says that, in spite of the corruption of English vowels, u retains the sound which it has in French, and that true is pronounced tru.
[y] not trou [ʊ]. (See the article, Langage, in the Dictionnaire Philosophique.) Voltaire was in England from 1725 to 1728, and was perfectly conversant with English usage. If we believe him, we must conclude that the old, front pronunciation of this vowel still survived among some speakers, right into the eighteenth century, although others, and perhaps a larger number, pronounced [u, jʊ]. Pope's rhyme blooms—perfumes, Eloisa, 217-18, and Lady Winchelsea's comes (= [kʊmz] and perfumes To Ldy Worsley at Longleat, are both in favour of [pəfjʊmz].


M.E. ai and a, and see also M.E. e, pp. 209, &c., above.

Later spellings showing levelling of M.E. e, a, ai. From Later Verney Letters, vol. i:—ea for ã, St. Jeamsis Park (1697), p. 37; to have her bed mead (1700), p. 75. ea for ai, my two meads, 48 (twice) (1699), and 69 (twice) (1700); a for ai, well ared, 36 (1699); a for e, for my own ware, 37 (1699); ay for ã, beyon say, 'sea', 107 (1702).

P. 253.

Vowels Un-shortened or Lengthened.

The Letters of Lady Brill. Harley have a number of interesting spellings indicating long vowels.

1. Spellings and Rhymes Showing Retention of Old Long Vowels as such.

(The following spellings are all from Lady Brill. Harley, except where otherwise stated:—
neeuer forgoot, P.P., p. 3 (1627); to geet 'get', p. 20 (1638); cp. Shakespeare's rhyme get—heat; heeld 'held', p. 13 (1638); fooute 'foot', p. 56 (1639); sheeding blood, p. 43 (1639); I toucke, p. 86 (1639); so wse a day, p. 89 (1640). (cp. Milton's rhyme wel—great, Pens. 8, and eat—wet, Pens. 80; feel 'fell', 119 (1641); hoot 'hot', p. 121 (1641); freend, Letter from Sir Harry Vane in Lady Brill. Harley's Letters, p. 236 (1650).

2. Spellings and Rhymes Implying Later Lengthening.

rest (n.), Ldy. B. H. p. 2 (1625); Milton rhymed rest with feast, Cowley with least; beest 'best', p. 5 (1629), cp. beast 'best', Mrs. Basire, p. 137 (1654); Cowley rhymed best—least—east; Ldy. B. H. loss 'loss', p. 31 (1638), also p. 71 (1639); loot, P.P. (ibid.); Spenser rhymed lost—boast, Dryden with coast, Dryden with boast, and coast; the hors coost me £8, p. 199 (1643); Hodges, 1643, says coast—cost are pronounced alike.

APPENDIX III

Reduction or Loss of Vowels in Unstressed Positions. Especially in Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth Centuries.

The Endings -en, -on.

These endings are differently treated in ordinary speech, and in poetry, according to the consonant which precedes.

1 (a) When the word ends in a stop, whether voiceless or voiced, the ending may become a mere syllabic -n: thus ridden, written, golden, open, beckon, &c., may become [rɪdn, rɪtn, ˈɡʊldn, ˈoʊpn, bɛkn], all consisting of two syllables, but with no vowel in the second syllable.
The same is true when -en follows a voiceless open consonant—listen, orphan, often, &c., may become [lɪs_n, ˈfɒrn], &c. The reason why -n in these positions constitutes a fresh syllable is that it is a very sonorous sound, more so than a stop, or a voiceless open consonant, whereas a stop following a vowel—as in bid—involves a reduction of sonority, then, if -n be uttered immediately after this, a fresh increase of sonority, and therefore a new syllable, results, as in [bɪd_n]. For these reasons final -n in all the above words, and others in which similar conditions exist, is always syllabic, and cannot be otherwise.

Combination Stop + -en + Vowel.

If -n, otherwise syllabic, be followed by another suffix beginning with a vowel such as -ing, -er, or -est, the -n tends to lose its syllabic quality, by virtue of the greater sonority of the following vowel, and to become purely consonantal. Thus opening [ˈɒp_nɪŋ], reckoning [rɛk_nɪŋ], listener [ˈlɪsnə] are all in ordinary speech pronounced with two, not three syllables.

A similar loss of the syllabic quality of -n may also occur in a breath-group in which the following word begins with a vowel. Thus hidden in a tree may become [ˈhɪdn ɪn ɑ tri] (four syllables) instead of [hi'dn ɪn ə trɪ] (five).

- en -on Preceded by a Voiced Open Consonant.

(a) In such words as even, heaven, driven, chosen, prison, risen, reason, the final -n is often uttered so as not to form a syllable. This is made possible by the fact that the difference in sonority between a voiced open consonant and -n is so slight that no increase in sonority is perceived in passing from one to the other. This monophthongic pronunciation of risen, heaven, &c., is perhaps less usual to-day than formerly, and in every-day speech, now, we probably utter a slightly syllabic -n in spite of the preceding voiced open consonant. The poets, however, often find it convenient to pronounce heaven, heavens, &c. as a single syllable in their lines.

(b) When a suffix beginning with a consonant follows, the single syllable in the first part of the word may remain as such, and heavenly, &c., may function in verse as two syllables, and not as three.

The Series Voiced Open Consonant + -en + Vowel.

If -n, as we saw above (2) following a stop, or voiceless open consonant, often loses its syllabic quality when a vowel follows, still more certainly does this happen with the class of words just considered. Thus if even, prison, &c., are often single syllables in verse, this character is generally secured to them beyond doubt in the compounds, evening prisoner [ˈɪvn briberyprɪznə]. When the same series occurs in a breath-group, the syllabic quality of -n readily disappears. Thus, Even in our ashes consists of five syllables, and not of six in Gray's line, and the series prison ordained in to these rebellious here this prison ordered in P. L. 71, the metre requires [prɪzn ərdəind] exactly as in [prɪznə].

Fallen, swolen, stolen.

These words are now usually pronounced as two syllables [ˈfɔlən, ˈswoʊlan, ˈstoʊlen], at any rate, at the end of a sentence, and before consonants—fallen through, &c. But when they occur before vowels they are often monosyllables—fallen in, stolen away, swolen up. On the other hand, Milton and his contemporaries seem to have pronounced them as monosyllables in all positions. Thus:

Fall'n cherube to be weak is miserable.

—P. L. i, 167, also in 92.
APPENDIX

But swolne with wind and the rank mist they draw.

—Lyc. 126.

Stolne on his wing my three and twentith year.

—Sonnet on 23rd Birthday.

In the last line the following vowel would in any case tend to ensure the purely consonantal character of -n.

The reason why these three words can easily become monopthongs is that there is no increase of sonority in -n as compared with -l. If two syllables are required by the metre in a line of verse, a mere syllabic -n hardly constitutes a satisfactory syllable coming after -l, and we should probably prefer to pronounce [fSten], &c., as in Dryden’s:

Fallen, fallen, fallen, fallen,
Fallen from his high estate.

Alexander’s Feast, 77-8.

These principles are applied in their verse, and often recognized in the spelling, by many poets, and with remarkable, though not complete, consistency by Milton. For a discussion of Milton’s spellings of the -en and -on words, reference should be made to the remarks of Miss Helen Darbishire in the Introduction to her edition of the Morgan MS. of Bk. I of P. L., pp. xxviii, and xxxii and xxxiv, and further to H. C. Wyld, The Significance of ’n and -en in Milton’s Spelling, Englische Studien, 1935, pp. 138-48.

It is pointed out by Miss Darbishire that Alexander Gill, Milton’s headmaster at St. Paul’s, recognizes in Logonomia (1621), pp. 134-5 of Reprint, that -n, -l, -r could each constitute a syllable, without any vowel in front of them. What Gill does not appear to notice is that these sounds when final are not always syllabic. (See remarks under 3, 4, and 5 above).

Gill in his phonetic transcriptions writes simply -n in words of all our classes—brōkn, goldn, lesn, oxn; chōsn, prizn, stēn, hevn; stōln, &c., &c., and does not call attention to the fact that -n is not necessarily a syllable in words of classes 3 and 5. Yet he makes no difference in the spelling of hevn between

And thundring dzōv that hyh in hevn duth dυel, where the word is a single syllable, and—Thinking tu skḍl the hēvn of hir hart, where it is two. The mark of length on hēvn in the last line may possibly represent an actual pronunciation, from M.E. hēven.

Milton’s Spellings.

We may take it that the spellings in Trin. Coll. MS. represent what Milton intended, since these are in his own handwriting, though, indeed, he is not perfectly consistent.

The spellings in the Morgan MS., and in the early editions, are on the whole what Milton wanted, and they show evidence of careful revision.

Milton might have used the symbol ’n to represent a genuine syllabic -n (in trod’n, &c.), and have distinguished from this the -n which did not form a syllable (in heavn, &c.) by writing the latter always with plain -n. Unfortunately, he does not make this distinction, but writes ’n or n indifferently for syllabic and non-syllabic -n. ’n, however, is much more frequent for both. Milton further occasionally, though rarely, writes -dn, -en, or -’en, -’en, to indicate the loss of the syllable. Lastly, he sometimes, both in Trin. MS., and in Morgan, writes -en when no syllable is required by the verse. In some cases the early editions are more in accordance with Milton’s principles than the MS.

A few examples of the various classes of words from the poetry:—

Class 1 (a). Stop + -en (syllabic -n).

Of that forbidd’n tree whose mortal taste

Morgan MS., 2.

(The original scribe wrote forbidden. An apostrophe in a darker ink has been added above the line, between -d- and -n. Miss Darbishire sees a stroke deleting the e, but this is practically invisible in the facsimile.)

Op’n’d into the hill a spacious wound.

—Morgan MS., 689.
Like night, and dark'n'd all the Land of Nile.
—Morgan MS., 343.

Thy firm unshak'n virtue ever brings.
—Sonnet to Fairfax, Trin. MS.

Sudden.

We may note that Gill writes sudaine, and Milton suddaine, Com., 552, 954, and elsewhere, and also sudden, Lyc., 74. Gill never writes sdn for this word, nor Milton sdd'n. Both prefer the Spenserian and M.E. spelling with -ain(e). This form may go back to an earlier type with the older system of stressing upon the second syllable. This type, when the accent was subsequently shifted to the first syllable, at any rate among some speakers, might retain the 'clear' vowel in the second syllable longer than words in which this had always been unstressed. Gill and Milton then, appear not to have reduced this syllable to a syllabic -n. That other, more colloquial speakers did so, however, is shown by Mrs. Isham's spelling sudnly (1644), cit. p. 272 above.

Class 2. Series stop + -en-, -on- + vowel (loss of syllabic quality).

From Trin. Coll. MS. (no apostrophe):—

Of calling shapes and beckning shadows dire.

Of other care they little reckning make.

atning our flocks with the fresh dewes of night.

From Morgan MS. (with or without apostrophe):—

Likning his Maker to the grazed ox.

Distends with pride and hardning in his strength.

(586 (1st Ed., Lik'ning).

(572.

(1st Ed. Drivn; this spelling occurs also in the prose notes in Trin. MS.)

In the beginning how the Heav'ns and Earth.

(9.

(I have counted twenty-nine examples of Heav'n so spelt, and one of Heav'nly, in Morgan M.S.)
Class 4. Series as in 3 Followed by a Vowel.

In line 71, cited above under No. 4, in preliminary statement of the various classes of words, the metre shows that the phrase *prison ordain'd* is to be uttered as three syllables. *(Note.—There are other instances of this type of spelling in Milton, where a vowel, though written, has an apostrophe placed before or over it, to indicate that the syllable is elided: thus—

That he, the supream Good, to whome all things ill, Com., 217; to 'inveigle and invite th' unwary sense, (Com., 538; 'th' all giver would be' unthankt, would be unprais'd, Com., 723.

It will be noted later that such spellings are frequent in Cowley.

In Morgan MS., 211, *risen* is left uncorrected, but has been amended to *ris'n* in the 1st and 2nd Editions. The following vowel ensures a monosyllable, as the metre demands—Had risen or heav'd his head, but that the will. A similar mis-writing occurs in a similar series in Morgan MS., 680. From *Heav'n* for even in *Heav'n*. Here the 1st Ed. has ev'n. In Trin MS., Com. 786, the necessarily monophthongic *heav'n* is so written—ne'er looks to heav'n amidst his gorgeous feast, Com., 786, and also in Lyc., 84...

In Lyc., 34, *cloven* is written *clou'n* by Milton himself, although the metre requires two syllables. Possibly the apostrophe is not intended as a cancelling mark. Even so, *cloven* would seem to be a better spelling.

In Morgan MS., 248, it is written:—

Whom reason hath equald, force hath made supream.

The word *reason* is a monosyllable here as the metre requires, and the phonetic surroundings demand. *Hath* in an unstressed position would normally lose its *h*, and the series, in Milton's pronunciation, was [räznəp ikwold]. The scribe should have written *reas'n*, *reasn*, or *reas'on*. Trin. Coll. MS. has *Evning*, Lyc., 30.

Class 5. The fallen, stolen Group.

This group as monophthongs has already been illustrated above. It may be noted that Morgan MS. has *fal'n* at least three times, 84, 282, 330, and in Milton's own hand *fain*, in the prose notes of Trin. Coll. MS. (poems on Scriptural subjects).

Milton's Pronunciation of *-en* + *-on* when Not Syllabic *-n*.

The details just discussed are important because, while of interest from a purely textual point of view, they have also a far wider significance. They have a bearing on Milton's actual pronunciation, and as similar spellings before, and after, and during his time show, this pronunciation was not confined to the poet, and to his schoolmaster Gill, but were normal in colloquial sixteenth- and seventeenth-century English.

But if it is desirable to learn that Milton generally pronounced *heaven*, and *prison*, etc., as monosyllables, and *trodden, open* with a mere syllabic *-n*, it will seem no less desirable to attempt at least to form some idea of how Milton pronounced the second syllable of *heaven* etc. when dissyllabic, and so written:—

And Powers that earst in Heaven sat on thrones.

—Morgan MS., 360.

Or

Thir glory witherd. As when Heavens fire

—ibid., 612.

Or

Pour'd never from her frozen loynes, to passe

Again, when his scribe writes, without correction:—

And broken chariot wheeles, so thick bestrowm

and

Darkens the streets then wander forth the sonnes

—352.

—311.

—501.
it may be asked, why not brok’n and dark’ns, since these spellings would suggest perfectly adequate disyllables? It is at least arguable that Milton intended something more here, and in many other lines where -en is written after stop consonants, than merely a syllabic -n. The effect is finer, and more weighty in these lines if the suffix be pronounced as either [an] or [en]. But even if this be thought a mere refinement, there is still heaven and other words of this group to be reckoned with.

A glance at pp. 271–2 above shows that the ending -en, both in heaven, &c. (after voiced open consonants) and also in such words as open, written, &c. (after stops) is often written -in, or -yn, in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The examples collected from seventeenth-century sources are, unfortunately, less numerous. Some additional examples may now be given from sources of fifteenth to seventeenth century. In the Paston Letters -yn seems to be the usual form in all writers. A few may be quoted. Marg. Paston has, amongst many others, gotyn, P. P. iii. 295 (1482); tokyn (n) twice, iii. 95 (1483); the Duke of Suffolk has heyn ’heaven’, i. 122 (1450); and the Prior of Bromholm has writyn, P. P. i. 79 (1449). From the sixteenth century we may add tokyns in a letter of John Herrick, the poet’s father; from the seventeenth—aspyn, Gill (1621), p. 111. 13; oftyn, Lady Brill. Harley, 321 (1639); -men appears as -min in Gill (in the pronunciation of the ’Mopsae’, in gintilmin p. 38. 8, and in townsmyn, Lady Brill. Harley, 98 (1640).

Turning to spellings for -on (see pp. 275–6 above) we may add to the examples there given; from Paston Letters, rekyn (vb.), Sir J. Paston, ii. 321 (1468); poysened, ii. 93 (Mem. on French Prisoners). From sixteenth century: comes pryson, several times, Lady Hungerford, 265–6 (1569).

From the available evidence we are probably safe in supposing that many speakers, at least, from the fifteenth century onwards, pronounced heaven, prison, &c., as [hevi’n, prizm] when they did not pronounce the words as monosyllables, and often, open, reckon, &c., as [5tin, öpin, rekin] when the unstressed syllables here were not reduced to mere syllabic -n.

### Spellings Resembling, or Identical with those of Gill and Milton.

1. -en in P. P.
   
   (a) Monosyllabic swolne, and fain(e) are so printed in the early editions of Spenser; fain is actually written by Mrs. Isham, Verney Mem. i. (1639), and by Mrs. Basire, 135 (1654).

   (b) Giny, Mrs. Isham, Verney Mem. i (1639); thouzn ’1000’, Cooper (1685).

2. -on, -en + Vowel in Suffix; Loss of Syllabic Quality (see examples from Milton above).

   Gill spells rekning; Lady Brill. Harley reckning, 18 (1638); Dryden spells reck’ning. A very early example of this type occurs in the Paston Letters, rekning, Sir J. Paston, ii. 348 (1469).

   Gill has oftn, so also Lady Brill. Harley, 84 (1640).

3. Voiced Open Consonant + -on, -en, followed by a Vowel.

   The word prisoner is spelt prisner by Gill; prisner, according to Miss Darbishire, is Milton’s spelling. With these we may compare prisner, Lady Brill. Harley, 11 (1638), and prisners, -ners, 205 (1643); prisners (twice), Mrs. Isham, Verney Mem. ii. 203 (1644); presnor, Mrs. Basire, 108 (1651).

   A similar loss of a syllable under the same conditions is seen in reasonabell, Lady Brill. Harley, 12 (1638), 55 (1639), and 97 (1640).

   The same lady also writes seasning, and seasned, 53 (1639).

### Syllabic -1.

Gill recognized the existence of this sound as of syllabic -n. He habitually spells—trublj’ibl, girdl, litl, intangl, tikl, humblness, &c., &c. Milton expresses this sound by ’l, and ’l, in his autograph MS. and in the Morgan MS. Thus:—myr’ls,
APPENDIX

Lyc. 2; strangl'd, Com. 729; humbl'd (prose Notes, 'Adam unparadised' in Trin. Coll. MS.; wrinki'd, corrected by Milton from wrinkled, in cancelled line in Comus; stabl'd, Com. 534. The spelling has't, Lyc. 42, no doubt represents [hæzl], the e being merely an indication that the vowel in preceding syllable is long. In the Morgan MS. I have noted doubl'd, 485; manacl'd, 426; troubl'd, 557 and 616; rifl'd, 687; fabl'd, 741.

Spenser, or his printers, usually prefer the other type—trembled [trembltd]. Sprinkled, handled, &c. I have noted a fair number of [-'d spellings in Chap­man's plays—e.g., speckl'd, baffi'd, mangel'd, stifi'd, &c., &c. And further, what must be intended for syllabic -l in the Paston Letters, peepil, i. 166–7, Justice Yelverton (1450). As a matter of fact, the ordinary spelling -le, people, &c., can hardly have ever expressed anything else but syllabic -l. Side by side with the above spelling, however, the writers of the Paston Letters constantly write peepil, and peeple.

It should be noted that Gill does not write ball for battle, but batails, 113, 12, &c., and that Milton writes the word battaile, Com. 654, and also battel, and cp. imbatteld, Morgan MS., 130. He does, however, write battlements, Morgan MS., 742. Here we must assume syllabic -l. In the other spellings, the M.E. type battaile is perpetuated, and the forms suggest that the shifting of stress to the first syllable took place, among some speakers, too late for a complete reduction of the second syllable to mere syllabic -l.

Milton writes in his own hand, navill ' navel', Com., 550, and in all places evil(l).

Syllabic -r.

From the fifteenth-century spellings cited on pp. 270–1 above it appears that the ending -er after a consonant is variously written -yr, -ur, of which the former seems to predominate. In addition, there are a few spellings without a vowel—fadr, massangr, remembr, undr, ware, murdre, from Marg. Paston, Sir J. Fortescue and Caxton. To these may now be added (all from Paston Letters):—Arblastr, i. 128, J. Denyes (1450); remembr, ii. 93, J. Paston the Elder (1462); ' my nonne propr goodes ', i. 133, J. Payne (1465); her afr, iii. 14, Sir J. Paston (1471). It seems probable that such spellings express a syllabic -r.

The variant spellings may all have been intended to express more or less this same sound—either syllabic -r, or an indeterminate vowel followed by a weak consonantal -r. Our present pronunciation [s(r)] is, in fact, very old. It may have arisen direct from the weakening of syllabic -r.

Gill writes the ending -er as such—biter, beter, fcider, &c., and Milton, I think, does not use such spellings as bettr, bittr. I have noted the isolated spelling betr in the Verney Mem. ii. 319, in a letter of Mrs. Sherrard (1657). This lady's pronunciation, as well as that of Gill and of Milton, and their later contemporaries, was most likely [beta].

Loss of Vowel Before -r- in Unstressed Syllables when a Vowel Follows.

I have noted robrys, robbryys in Paston Letters, ii. 32, Marg. Paston (1469). Spenser's flouring (F. 0., 2, 7, 16) may be a case in point, cp. Milton's flowrets, Lyc., 133 (Trin. Coll. MS.); and watrie, Lyc., 12, and watry, Morgan MS., 397, certainly are. Other examples of vowel loss before r + vowel in Milton are imbroidrie, Lyc., 148, and emrald, Com., 894.

Milton often omits the vowel before -r- when—in follows, sometimes putting an apostrophe, sometimes not:—Trin. Coll. MS., hov'ring; Com., 214, wondring in Notes for Poems on O.T. subjects. On the other hand, slandering occurs in the same Notes, and suffering in Morgan MS., 158, and hovering, ibid., 345, where the metre requires only two syllables in each instance.

Morgan MS. has also adventrous, 13; wellring, 78; thundring, 233; bord'ring 219, &c.

In Com., 79, Milton first wrote adventurous, but on consideration, struck out u before -r- and put an apostrophe; in Com., 609, he writes ventrous. Note that Milton writes venter (vb.), Com., 228.
Similar spellings seem not to be used by Gill.

The loss of a syllable before -r- is common in poetry in the seventeenth century and later.

Cowley sometimes omits the vowel letter, putting an apostrophe to mark the omission of it and of the syllable—vic'try, gen'rous, conqu'rous; sometimes writes the letter but puts an apostrophe before it, to show that the syllable is lost for which it stands—iv'ory (one syllable), rig'orous (two syllables), Mem'ory (two syllables), Lus'ury (two syllables), discov'ering (three syllables), qui'v'ering (two syllables), &c. With this practice, cp. Milton's spellings pris'm or- &c., cited above, p. 405.

Dryden cuts out the letter and puts an apostrophe when a syllable is lost—ign'rant, re'v'nence, feu'rish, &c. Swift has many similar spellings—shiv'ring, ven't'ring, iv'ory, na't'ral.

-er, -our + -ed.

Spenser's printers usually prefer the types nomb'red, slumb'red, off'red, suff'red, &c., or, without elision of the vowel before the -r, stombered, scat'tered, the type an'swer'd, deliv'er'd, &c., being rarer. Milton, however, prefers the latter type. The Trin. Coll. MS. has enter'd, Circumcis., ii; altered from entered; ent'er'd, in Plan for P. L., murder'd, mar'ty'r'd, Notes, O.E. History, discov'er'd, cover'd, Poems on Scriptural subjects; hinder'd, hono'urd, 'Ltt'r. to a Freind'.

The scribe of Morgan MS. has written endan'ger'd, shatter'd, 202, an'swer'd, 272, scatter'd, 326, scep'ter'd, 734, cover'd, 763; further, without an apostrophe, scatter'd, 304, with'er'd, 612, ent'er'd, 731. This is the less archaic, more colloquial type. Such forms as scatter'd, labour'd, conquer'd, endan'ger'd, hono'rd, sever'd, and so on, are found in Donne, Herrick, Chapman, Cowley, and Dryden.

I have noted suffer'd, P. P. Verney Mem. ii, 81, Lady Sussex (1642), and the same lady writes a ret'ierde life, ii, 153 (1643).

**Loss of Unstressed Syllable in Other Words.**

**Business.** Gill spells biz'n'es, 88, 29, 89, 2 (Reprint). Milton's usual spelling is buis'n'es, in Trin. Coll. MS. Com., 109, in Notes for Poems on Scriptural subjects, in a cancelled passage, Com., 18, and in Morgan MS., 150 (buis'nesse), and elsewhere. Miss Darbishire suggests that Milton got this spelling (as regards the dropping of -i- in the middle of the word) from Gill. But this was in Milton's day, as now, the ordinary pronunciation (to judge by the spellings). I have collected the following examples:—buis'nis, Mrs. Pulteney (later Mrs. Eure), Verney Papers, 222 (1638); also buis'nis, Verney Mem. i, 157 (1643); buis'neses, Lady Brill. Harley, 3, 5, 10 (1627 and 1638); also buis'neses, 75 (1639); both spellings, the only ones, occur constantly in this lady's letters. She often transposes the order of letters, but in this case, she may merely have put the dot in the wrong place; bus'nis, Lady Vere, Lady Brill.'s Letters, 213 (1641); buis'nis, and hes'nis, Mrs. Basire, 109 (1651); bus'nises, Holmes, the Verneys' Steward, Verney Mem. ii, 411 (1659). Dryden and Swift constantly print bus'nis.'

**Cov'nant(s),** Milton's own MS., Circumcis., 21, and Comus, 682.

**Tapstrie hall,** Com., 224; Cowley, tap'est'ry, Dav. iii.

**Venson,** Lady Brill. Harley, 62 (1639); Chapman, Emp. of Germany; Jones (1701) says i not pronounced in this word.

**Exemnation,** Lady Brill. Harley, 69.

**Med'cinall,** Milton, Com. 636.

**Abslate, 'absolute',** Lady Sydenham, Verney Mem. ii, 102 (1641).

**Com'pany,** Lady Hobart, Verney Mem. iii, 407 (1657).

**Inno'cent, unusu'al, annu'al, om'nous,** all in Cowley; cab'net, filth'ness, Dryden.
APPENDIX IV

Points Connected with the Consonants.

**Loss of -l in should and would.** (See Ch. viii., p. 287.)

I am now convinced that the loss of -l- in these words occurred primarily in unstressed positions, and that these weak types without -l- were later generalized in all positions. On the other hand, it is established both by rhymes and by the statements of grammarians that pronunciations with -l- were still current among some speakers, at any rate in stressed forms, after the evidence of occasional spellings proves that the -l- had ceased to be pronounced in weak positions. I may note here a very early example of the loss of -l- in *should*, which is spelt *schyd* three times in a letter from Robert, Prior of Bromholm, written in 1449, Paston Letters, i. 78. This is nearly one hundred years earlier than the form from Elyot’s *Gouernour* quoted on p. 297 above, but there is no reason to doubt its genuineness, especially as the vowel is also evidently reduced in the weak position. Our present-day unstressed [əd] is a normal development of earlier [ud, ad]. The present-day stressed form [ud] may well be from an earlier [ud] with the later vowel shortening as in [ʌd] from earlier [ʌd]. See p. 238 above. Our [wud] may be explained in the same way from earlier [wud], which indeed is vouched for by Hodges (1643), who says that the word is pronounced like wood, and wooed. The u in this word would, in any case, be preserved from the un-rounding discussed on p. 232 above by the initial u-. Milton in the *Letter to a freind* writes woud in his autograph MS. (= [wud]).

Waller, *Summer Island*, 49–50, rhymes *would—mud*, which seems to imply for the former a short vowel and no -l-. Possibly *m-* here preserved a rounded vowel in mud as *w-* has done in *would*.

1 retained.

By the side of the -l-less type of pronunciation, there is, I think, evidence equally unequivocal for the existence in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, of another pronunciation, with -l-, not only in *should* and *would*, but also in *could*. It may perhaps have been assumed by some that in the last word, the -l- was purely graphic, and due to the written forms of the other two. But the analogy went deeper than that, and influenced the pronunciation also; indeed it may have begun in the spoken language during the sixteenth century.

Let us consider first the evidence of the rhymes for each word. *Could* is rhymed by Spenser with *behold, mould, behold, gould* ‘gold’; also with *should and would*; by Drayton with *behold*. Dryden rhymed *could* with *good*.

*Would* is rhymed with *hold, behold* by Wyatt; with *mould,ould* ‘told’, *gold*, *hold*, by Spenser; with *hold, behold* by Drayton.

*Should* is rhymed by Wyatt with *behold, hold, gold*; by Shakespeare with *cool’d* (V. and A., 385, &c.) by Spenser with *mould, hold, behold*.

Several of the seventeenth-century grammarians testify to pronunciations with -l-. Gill (1621) transcribes *wiild, shiild, kiild* (= [uːl]). Price (1662) puts *could, cold, and cool’d* together; Wharton (1653) writes *woold, coold, shoold* as expressing this pronunciation, and Cooper (1685) says that *could* is pronounced like *cool’d*.

On the other hand, Milton in the Sonnet To my freind Mr. Hen. Laws, dated February 9, 1645 (second draft) writes *coudest*, crosses this out, and writes *cou’dst*, which seems to suggest that he did not pronounce -l- in this word, though it is true it is not very strongly stressed in the line. P. 301.

**Metathesis of -x- (hunderd, apurn, &c.)**

*Hundred* is not infrequently written *hundurd, hunderd, &c.*, in the seventeenth century, and the pronunciation which this suggests is attested by grammarians’ statements, and by such rhymes as Tennyson’s in the Charge of the Light
Brigade—*thunder'd*, wonder'd with *hundred*. Among many old people of good breeding this pronunciation survived into the present century. *Hundred* occurs Stonor Papers i, 71 (1465). Milton may well have said *[hand[a(r)]d]*, though the evidence for this is rather weak. Miss Darbishire believes he intended to write *hunderd*, or to have it written and printed. The fact is that although this spelling never occurs in Milton's own handwriting (cp. *hundred* in Arcades 22), this is printed *hunderd* in the Ed. of 1645, in the *Errata* of 1668 Ed. of P.L. i. 760, and in the 2nd Ed. in the text. In the Morgan MS. of Bk. I of P.L. 709 *hundred* is altered to *hunderd*. This, however, is cancelled in favour of *row of*. (See Miss D.'s note on this line in her Ed. of the MS.) There is good ground for believing that this MS. was written and corrected under Milton's own direction. Miss Darbishire has also found various examples of *hunderd* in Milton's prose works. I have noted the following spellings of the word:—1635, *hundered*, Hon. James Dillon (twice), Verney Papers 165; 1639, *hunderd*, Sir Edm. Verney, Verney Papers 246, and Lady Brill. Harley Letters, p. 40; this lady also writes *hunderd*; 1642 *hunderd*, Cary Gardiner, Verney Mem., ii. 63; 1685, Cooper transcribes *hundurd*; 1701, Jones says that the sound -*erd* is written -*red* in *hundred*. Walker, Pronouncing Dictionary (4th Ed.), 1806, gives *hundred* as the 'solemni', *hundurd* as the colloquial pronunciation also *apurn, saffurn*.

In addition to *Saffurn* cit. above p. 301, the spelling *safern* occurs in Gill's Logonomia, p. 112. 5, in a transcription of F.Q. i. ii. 7, where Spenser's text has *saffron*. Gill also writes *brethern*, 129, 5 and 6; Mrs. Basire, 135 (1654) writes *brethren*.

APPENDIX V

P. 329.

**Weak Forms of their (thir, thyr, ther).**

Miss Darbishire has traced the history of Milton's spellings, *thre*, and *thir*, in an elaborate Appendix (pp. 71–4) to her edition of Morgan MS. Speaking generally, the former spelling is used in the earlier portion of Trin. Coll. MS., and the second in that part written in and after 1642, and in subsequent editions of Milton's works supervised by the poet. The strong form *their* is used but sparingly, thus, for instance, in Morgan MS. it occurs only five times, while *thir* is written sixty-four times. The early printed editions of all the Books of P.L. show a similar disparity in the use of *thir* and *their*. It must be said at once that the difference between *thir* and *their* has no significance for the pronunciation, however interesting it may be to the textual critic. We are concerned here with Milton's preference for the weak form, probably pronounced *[5a(r)]*. An interesting point noted by Miss Darbishire (p. 70) is that when Milton dictated *thir*, his scribe heard it as *the*, and thus wrote it, e.g. *With singed top thir stately growth though bare* (Morgan MS. 614) where *thir* has been corrected from *the*. This makes it highly probable that -*r* was not pronounced here by the poet. Both of Milton's favourite spellings are found among others of his contemporaries. Thus, in the Letters of Mrs. Basire:—*thire* (1651), 109, and 112 (1653); *thyr* (1655), 142, and (1656), 147. Elsewhere the same lady writes *ther* (1654), 138.

The most frequent weak form which I have noted is *ther*:—Lady Brill. Harley, 1618; Lady Sussex, Verney Mem. ii. 82, &c. (1642); Mrs. Adams (1697) in V. Letters of eighteenth century, i. See other early examples of weak forms of *they, their*, p. 329 above.

**Milton's Use of Spelling their.**

The weak form *thir* is generally used, 'correctly' enough, that is in un-stressed positions. It is, however, at least once written where contrasting stress seems to require the strong form, e.g.,

_With thir darkness durst affront his light._

—P.L. i. 391 (Morgan MS.).
APPENDIX

On the other hand, their is by no means written with perfect consistency only in stressed position. In fact it appears in, at most, two passages in this position in Morgan MS. :-

Who from the pit of Hell
Roaming to seek their prey on earth durst fix
Their seats long after next the seat of God.

P.L. i. 381-4.

In the last line their seats is certainly contrasted with the seat of God. In the second line their is probably unstressed. In the following line it may be questioned whether their is really stressed:-—Osiris, Isis, Orus, and their train.—P. L. i. 478. Miss Darbishire does not recognize this as one of the passages in which their is justified. She regards lines 391, and 384, as the only places where the strong form is certainly required. (See her Introduction to Morgan MS. p. xvii.

APPENDIX VI

P. 358.

Strong and Weak Forms of Have.

The normal stressed form from M.E. hāve was [hev] in E.Mod. Gill usually spells hav in his transcriptions, but also recognized the weak form, with short vowel—transcribed hav, e.g., I hav born, drunk, fled, but also in what hōp hav J?

The later poets rhyme the strong form with grave, save, gave, &c., just as Chaucer rhymes have—grave, &c. These rhymes occur in Spenser, Shakespeare, Drayton, Donne, Milton, Waller, Cowley, Dryden, to mention no more. This form has now been lost, except in the compound behave, in Sthn. and Standard English. Its equivalent survives, however, in Scots, ha e [hē].

The present-day stressed have [hav] is from a generalisation of the old weak type, and from this new weak forms [hav, av] and, after vowels, [v] have been developed.

In the seventeenth and early eighteenth century a weak form a = [ə] was current. Thus—then I thought she would a done, Mrs. Isham, Verney Papers, 262 (1639); I shud a bin silent, Cary Verney (Gardiner), Verney Mem. ii. 67 (1642); anoufe to a broke a mans hart, Mrs. Isham, Verney Mem. ii. 200 (1644); I mit a come to a seean you, Mrs. Basire, Letters, 139 (1653).

Swift ridicules I thot to ha come, as a fashionable absurdity, Tatter, 1710. The same type is also objected to by Swift in the negative construction I han't don't, 'have not done it' (1710, Tatter, No. 230). Peter Wentworth not infrequently uses this negative, e.g., Wentworth Papers, 86 (1709), and ibid. (1711), 231.

The form a for unstressed have is far older than the seventeenth century, however, and the following examples from the fifteenth-century Paston Letters may be noted:—I wold full fayn a ben, Earl of Oxford, i. 143 (1450); (they) wold a slayne hym, W. Wayte, i. 151 (1450); if he wold a named it. J. Osbern, i. 215 (1451); he myght a ben holpyn, Marg. Paston, iii. 24 (1471).
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