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Scandinavian Influence  
on <sup>the</sup> English Language

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A Thesis  
Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate  
School of the State University of Minnesota  
in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirement for the Degree of  
Master of Arts

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*'From the fury of the Northmen, Good Lord,  
deliver us.'*

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## Chapter I.

### Scandinavian Invasions.

The Scandinavian invasions of England may be divided into three periods. The first period (A. D. 787-855), comprises the time from the first recorded invasion till the first wintering-out of the invaders. The strangers would come in small bands, in the early spring, burning and ravaging the country wherever they went, but, upon the approach of winter, and the stormy season, or as soon as they had their vessels filled with booty, they returned to their native land. The people of the cold and almost barren countries of the north were greatly moved by the many alluring stories told about the great riches of the south, hence the following spring would bring new bands which repeated the operations of the previous year. During this period the sole object of the invaders seems to have been simply a search for booty. The second period (A. D. 855-878) brings

us to the treaty of Wedmore. This period saw the character of the invasions considerably changed. The petty bands made way for large armies. It was no longer a question of booty only, the strangers had come to stay. A sharp contest followed, in which the Scandinavians proved themselves the stronger race, and England became their new home. According to the stipulations of the treaty of Wedmore the Scandinavians were to evacuate Wessen and that part of Mercia south of Watling-Street, on the other hand the Scandinavian chieftains were to receive the district north of Watling-Street as vassals of the West Saxon king. The territory ceded by this treaty to the Scandinavians became known as the Danelagh, the dominion under the Danish law. This is of importance, as it was in this district that the Scandinavian influence became the strongest.

During the third period (A.D. 878-1042) the Scandinavians attained to great power in the country. After the treaty of Wedmore there

was peace and prosperity, but it did not last long. The death of Edgar (A.D. 975) ushered in a miserable period for the English. New invasions set in, which ended in a complete conquest of the country by Swines, king of Denmark, in 1013; and the English king, Ethelred, fled to Normandy. Ethelred, however, soon returned to take up again the struggle for his throne, but he was sternly opposed by Knut. Several attempts, on the part of the English, were made to throw off the foreign yoke, but with only partial success. Knut and Edmund, son of Ethelred, divided the whole country between themselves, and, when Edmund died, in 1016, Knut became the sole ruler over the whole realm. After the death of Knut his two sons reigned for a short time. They lacked that power and sagacity which had characterized the father, and the throne soon passed to Edward, known as the "Confessor." This brought an end to the Scandinavian dynasty.

## Chapter II.

Who the Scandinavians were that  
settled in England and their  
Relationship with the English.

The Scandinavians who settled in England represented three tribes or nations, Danes, Swedes, and Norwegians. The Danes were by far the most numerous. They settled on the east coast, chiefly in East Anglia, East Mercia, and Northumbria. The Norwegians, on the other hand, became the strongest to the Northwest. They had earlier established petty kingdoms on Shetland and Hebrides Islands, thence they moved along the west coast of Scotland, and settled in Ireland, Strathclyde, and on the islands of the Irish Sea. In the early part of the tenth century they set up a maritime kingdom in and about the Irish Sea, with Dublin as the capital, which lasted till the year 1014, when it was broken at the memorable battle of Clontarf. The Swedes did not seek the Western wat-



ers' as much as did the Norwegians and Danes. They chose more the "Austweg," the East Road, which led into Russia, and where they founded a strong empire in the ninth century. The number of Swedes in England must have been comparatively small. There is, however, the opinion among modern investigators that they have shared more widely in the Scandinavian achievements of the West than was formerly accredited to them.

The English and the Scandinavians were pretty much the same people. Both had been dwellers about the Baltic Sea, where they had had the same customs, institutions, language, and religion. They were kinsmen who had been separated for a period of three or four hundred years; and during that period, we may suppose, an extensive communication had been going on between them. The English, however, had changed somewhat during the time of their residence in England. First of all they had been converted to Christianity, and then Christianity they had

come in contact with southern culture and southern civilization. The Scandinavians, on the other hand, had remained practically in the same state of culture as were the English three hundred years before. Notwithstanding this difference both peoples felt themselves to be of kindred race. Ever since they parted in their fatherland over the sea a chain of unbroken literary intercourse had kept memories of old kinship alive (this fact is supported by the studies of Lawrence and Schofield, see Publications of the Modern Language Association of America, vol. XVII) and the ties of friendship and friendly relations they had not suffered to be broken. That the English had not given up their old language and traditions may probably be reckoned among the chief reasons why the Scandinavians sought the shores of England just at the time they did.

### Chapter III.

#### The Linguistic Conditions in the Tenth Century.

The similarity between Old English and the Scandinavian dialects, must have been very great. Cases are mentioned in the Norse Sagas of Norwegians who went to England and there made themselves understood in their own tongue. The Norwegians even looked upon English as a language common with their own. In Gunn-  
laugs Saga Ormstungu, in the seventh chapter, we read the following, "At this time (about A. D. 1000) there was one language in England, Norway, and Denmark; but the language of England changed when William the Bastard came to England." If a Norwegian could converse with an Englishman in his own dialect, we have every reason to believe that a Dane could, especially if we remember the closer relationship between the Anglians and the Danes.

From a linguistic point of view the period of the greatest Scandinavian influence in England may be said roughly to coincide with the period of the Scandinavian political supremacy. It may be born in mind that the Scandinavian settlers, as a rule, did not bring women with them, at any rate, the number of women could not have been very great. They would intermarry with the English. By virtue of their position the English women would be almost forced to acquire the language of their husbands. In this way English and Scandinavian came to exist side by side in the same family. The children would first learn the language of the mother and then that of the father, in other words they would be bilingual. The next generation would, in all probability, go a step further and adopt a language or dialect that would present some of the characteristics of both, a kind of English-Scandinavian dialect. The English Norwegian spoken by the

Norwegian peasant class in Minnesota to-day may furnish a pretty fair example of what such a language is like. It may well be said that if we should judge the status of the Norwegian language in Minnesota to-day by the standard set by the strictly literary monuments - if there be any such - we should somewhat miss the mark of the actual state of things. The literary Norwegians of two hundred years hence will probably be a better criterion of the spoken Norwegian of to-day. The literary folk, as a rule, constitute a very conservative class. Linguistic innovations begin with the lower classes and work upwards; and it takes a long time before the literary people will accept what has been considered vulgar, and thereby much is lost, or at least fails to be recorded. The monuments tell only a part of the story. We may be tolerably certain that the case under consideration is no exception.

The English, as the Scandinavians, spoke

several dialects. In Western, the south-western part of the island, West Saxon, as represented by the writings of King Alfred, was spoken. Most of the Anglo-Saxon literature has come down to us in this dialect. In Mercia, the middle portion of the island, the Mercian dialect was the literary language. This dialect differed little from the West-Saxon. In Northumbria we find the Northumbrian, dialect differing considerably from Mercian or West-Saxon, especially in inflexion and in the tendency to exhibit the unbroken vowels. By the side of these dialects there existed over the whole domain a popular speech, which differed from the standard dialects in vocabulary and in exhibiting a simpler grammar. In addition to this already complex situation the Scandinavian dialects spread over the whole district north of the Thames and east of Watling-Street, including Strathclyde and Northumbria. In short, this was about the linguistic situation at the close of the tenth century.

## Chapter IV.

### *Difficulties in Differentiating English and Scandinavian Elements.*

The facilities for gaining an adequate knowledge of the languages spoken by the Scandinavians at the time of their settlement in England, are rather meagre. The Norwegians colonized Iceland in the ninth century, and owing to the conservative spirit of the colonists - a colony is, as a rule, more conservative as regards its language than is the mother country - and owing to the careful cultivation of the language and early codification of the laws, Old Norse has been tolerably well preserved. With the exception of a few runic inscriptions the Eddas constitute the oldest Norse literature that has come down to us, and this literature was not written down until about the year 1200, but it shows a much older state of the language. Accordingly we have to make our deductions from literary monuments of a

much later date than the settlements. The difficulty is further enhanced by the fact that what we have of literature from that early period has come down to us in the West Scandinavian, which, already at this time, we may suppose to have differed considerably from the East Scandinavian. Of the Danish dialect, at this time, very little can be said with any degree of certainty. This is so much the more to be deplored, as it is just from this quarter that we should expect the greatest influence, in as much as the Danes were the most numerous. Thus one may readily see how inadequate as a criterion Old Norse, in many cases, might be.

On the side of English the situation is not very much better. During the political supremacy of Wessex the West-Saxon dialect became the literary language of the island, and nearly all the literature of that period has come down to us in the West-Saxon dialect. As already noted the Scandinavians settled in



greatest numbers in Mercia and Northumbria, hence we should expect that the dialects most influenced by their speech would be the Mercian and Northumbrian. But unfortunately the literature in these dialects is very scant.

## Chapter I.

### English Words Influenced by the Corresponding Scandinavian.

In several cases the Scandinavians gave new life to obsolete native words. Dale and barn would probably have disappeared, if it had not been for their revival in the north thru Norse influence. Likewise 'till' was a very common word in the Old English period, but after the Scandinavian settlement it became very common especially in the North.

Many native English words have adopted the meaning of the corresponding word in Scandinavian. It is not easy to explain the modern meaning of 'dream' from O.E. dream, fay, but it becomes quite obvious if we consider it to have taken over the meaning of the Old Norse 'draumr': Old English 'eorl', a brave warrior, became in the time of the Danish kings to mean 'an undertaking', the same as the Old Norse 'farl', later in the time of the

Norman dynasty it acquired its present meaning. Friend, broad, hollow, plough, and others may be cited to the same effect.

In Old Norse the 'n' suffix was a very common verbal suffix, expressing a causal or perfected sense. The 'jan' suffix was a distinct mark of the causal sense in Old English, but this suffix lost, in course of time, its force, and its place developed the use of the 'n' suffix, particularly in the northern counties. It is thought by some that this change is due to Norse influence. The time of its development seems to point in the same direction. Words that show this development may be mentioned: fatten, darken, lengthen, blacken, brighten, cheapen, gladden, and deepen.

Scandinavian influence is manifest in the formation of a few of the ordinals. In Old English the ordinals from the seventh to the tenth were formed by adding the suffix - oða to the corresponding cardinals and those from the thirteenth

to the nineteenth by adding the suffix *-teoda* or *-teoda* to the respective cardinal forms. In Old Norse, on the other hand, the suffix *-nde* or *-tandi* was added to the respective cardinal to form the ordinal. It is difficult to explain the 'n' in the Modern English forms, seventh to nineteenth, to have developed from the Old English forms, but, if we accept an influence from the Old Norse forms, the difficulty will be quite eradicated. It appears from a comparison of Norse and Old English forms that the English has not borrowed the Norse forms, but that the English forms have been influenced by the Norse.

Seventh, O.E. *seofoda*, O.N. *siunde* - ninth, O.E. *nigoda*, O.N. *nionde* - tenth, O.E. *teoda*, O.N. *tionde* - thirteenth, O.E. *þritteoda*, O.N. *þrentandi* - fourteenth, O.E. *fourteoda*, O.N. *ffortandi* - fifteenth, O.E. *fifteoda*, O.N. *fimmtandi* - sixteenth, O.E. *sixteoda*, O.N. *sextandi* - seventeenth, O.E. *seofonteoda*, O.N. *seytiandi* - eighteenth, O.E. *eighteoda*,

*Ō. N. atzandi* - nineteenth, *Ō. E. nigontenda*,  
*Ō. N. ritzandi*. Eleventh seems to have been  
 formed by analogy with the other forms, as  
 neither the Old English nor the Old Norse forms  
 would admit of such a development.

In a few cases the Scandinavians were  
 able to furnish the English with words that seem  
 to fit into their language better and which seemed  
 to express the idea better than did the native  
 words. This is shown in the modification of the  
 English pronominal system. In the late Old  
 English period there was a tendency to confuse  
 he, she, and he, they under a common form  
 he. To avoid this ambiguity they began to em-  
 ploy the demonstrative *þā* for he. But in the  
 Danelaw, where the Scandinavian element was  
 strong, *þā* in the sense he was superseded  
 by *þei* from the Old Norse *þeir*, the 'i' being  
 only an inflexional form. The form *þei*, once  
 established, brought with it also the genitive and  
 dative forms of the same pronoun, *þeira* and

praim, which in early Middle English were to *per*  
 and *prent*, from which we have the Modern forms,  
*they, their, them*. The pronoun *same* is also  
 of Scandinavian origin, O.N. *samer*. Other  
 pronominal forms may have existed by the  
 side of the native English forms. An inscrip-  
 tion in Yorkshire from about the year 1050  
 seems to verify this supposition. "A northman  
 by the name of Ulf caused a church to be built  
 for himself (here *honum* instead of *him* was  
 used) and for Gunnvare his wife." *Honum*  
 is a regular Old Norse form, but it has, how-  
 ever, been lost later.

## Chapter VI.

### Words Proven Scandinavian by Phonological Test.

In comparing English and Old Norse we find that they have, in some instances, diverged considerably in their development from primitive Teutonic. These differences may constitute a criterion by which we may be able to detect some of the Scandinavian loan-words in English. Owing to the scanty remains of the Old Scand. dialects Old Norse, in this case, will virtually mean Icelandic, and for philological purposes it may serve with quite sufficient exactness, since Icelandic has preserved the Old Scandinavian forms quite faithfully. However, we find in English Norse words which present a more archaic form than do the Icelandic:

#### A. Consonants.

An original medial 'w' preceded by a short vowel became in Old Norse 'gg'; whereas in West Germanic an 'r' developed before this

'i' and the developed 'i' united with the preceding short vowel to form a diphthong, except the short vowel happened to be an 'i', in which case the combination resulted in an 'i'. Original medial 'j' preceded by a short vowel had a similar development. It became in Old Norse 'gg' while in West Germanic an 'i' developed before the 'j', forming with the preceding short vowel a diphthong, except when the preceding vowel was an 'i', in which case we have an 'i'. If used in English words showing 'gg' going back to a primitive Germanic 'w' or 'j' preceded by a short vowel, it is a certain test of Scandinavian loan-words.

M.E. *big*, 'barley', Scotch and North English dialects *bigg*, O.N. *bygg*, a word very common in all the Scandinavian countries. The O.E. form is *bēow*, 'barley', which shows the West Germanic development - North English *dag dew*, O.N. *dögg*, Goth. *\*daggwa*; OE *diow*. *Bidaggon*, 'to splash with, especially to berure



the bottom of a dress, may be of the same origin, however, the connection is somewhat doubtful. - M.E. gleg 'clearsighted,' O.N. glöggr, Goth. glöggrō, the native English form is gliow - M.E. hag 'gap,' O.N. hogg, O.E. hēowan is of the same stem - M.E. nig and niggard, O.N. hnutggr, 'stingy,' O.E. hneaw - North English seug 'shades' is from O.W.S. skuggia Goth. skuggwa - seug 'to hide' O.W.S. skuggia - M.E. trigg, 'faithful,' O.N. trygg, Goth. tryggus, O.E. triow - M.E. egg, O.N. egg, O.E. az - M.E. eggen, O.N. eggja, 'to egg on'.

Teutonic 'w,' in initial position, was dropped before back vowels and liquid consonants, before 'r' only when followed by a back vowel, in Scandinavian. In English 'w' remained intact under these conditions. The loss of initial 'w' in Middle English is a test of Scandinavian loan-word. M.E. lit, 'color,' O.N. litr, Goth. wliht, beside of white from O.E. white - M.E. littrun, 'look,' O.N. lita - M.E. sker 'ung,' O.N. skel, Goth. wihra

O.N. okr, Goth. wokers - M.E. orme (found  
 in proper names) 'serpent', O.N. ormt, Goth.  
 wairms - M.E. of, 'mad'; O.N. odr, Goth.  
 wops - ulf 'wolf', O.N. ulfr, Goth. wulfs.

Old English 'sc', Teutonic 'sk', de-  
 veloped regularly into Middle English  $\text{š}$  (sh)  
 written *sc*, however, there are a few exceptions  
 to this, especially in medial and final positions.  
 In Old Norse Teutonic 'sk' retained its original  
 sound. Teutonic 'sk' sound in Middle English  
 would point to Scandinavian influence, but  
 it is difficult to determine the extent of loan-  
 words in 'sk' on account of the peculiar Mid-  
 dle English spelling; *sc* was used both for  
 the sound  $\text{š}$  and *sk*, only in cases where  
 the actual spelling *sk* occurs can there be  
 much certainty. A few such words may  
 be adduced: M.E. skate 'enjury', O.N.  
 skadi 'harm', Goth. skafis - M.E. skind-  
 en 'to hurry', O.N. skynda. The native Old  
 English is scyndan (Beow. line 418) - M.E.

sker 'clear', O.N. skirr, Goth. skir - M.E. skerte, by the side of skirtē, the native word, O.N. skyrta - M.E. skriken 'to call aloud', O.N. skrokia - M.E. askefise 'one who blows into the ashes', a very common word of contempt in the Norwegian dialects, to be compared with the English 'good-for-nothing' - M.E. minnisk 'human', O.N. menask, Goth. manniska.

Teutonic *lf*, *rf* and *ht* became assimilated to *ll*, *nn*, and *tt* (sometimes *t*) respectively in West Scandinavian before the year 900; assimilation did not always take place in East Scandinavian. In English Teutonic *lf*, *rf*, and *ht* are represented by *ld*, *f*, and *ht* respectively. Therefore Teutonic *lf*, *rf*, and *ht* appearing in English words as *ll*, *nn*, and *tt* point to Scandinavian origin. M.E. hellew 'to pour out', by the side of the native word halden, 'to pour', O.N. hella, Goth. hulpei in the compound wiljahulpei - M.E. fell 'hell', O.N. fell, <sup>+</sup>felR - M.E. minne,

'rememberance'; O.N. minni; Goth. gaminþri-  
 M.E. sannen 'to prove', to be compared with  
 sēpan 'to prove' - M.E. sit 'grief' and siten  
 'to grieve at'; O.N. syta related to Goth. sauhþs.

In Old Norse -t final is a mark of  
 the nominative and accusative, singular, neuter  
 of the adjective; and the same form of the adjective  
 was often used adverbially. A few words in Eng-  
 lish show this -t: thwart, O.N. þwart, likewise  
 athwart. The Anglo-Saxon cognate is þencorh-  
 scant, O.N. skamt - want, O.N. vanta 'defi-  
 cient', O.E. cognate, wan - wight 'valiant',  
 O.N. vigt

Another feature peculiar to the Old Norse  
 was the formation of the passive voice by ad-  
 ding the reflexive pronoun to the verb stem.  
 In borrowing the English mistook the reflexive  
 pronoun for being a part of the verb stem, and  
 took over the whole form. In English such words  
 lost their passive force and became treated  
 as active verbs. Such words are: busk, bask,

addle and thrive, from Old Norse buask, baðak  
öðlak and þrivask, the two last mentioned have  
lost the reflexive.

In initial position Teutonic ʒ (ȝ)  
appears in Scandinavian as a stop consonant (g).  
In English Teutonic ʒ became a palatal spirant  
before Teutonic front vowels. In most Middle  
English manuscript no distinction is made  
between the stop and palatal spirant, but in  
manuscripts where such distinction is made  
the stop consonant before the front vowels may  
be considered a sign of Scandinavian loan-  
word: M.E. garth 'a small piece of inclosed ground',  
O.N. garðr, Goth. gards, by the side of the native  
word gearð - M.E. garen 'to do', O.N. göra; the  
native cognate is ȝearwian - M.E. gilde 'bro-  
therhood', O.N. gildi; Goth. gild; English ȝelde  
in ȝeldeshalle 'guildhall' - M.E. giren 'to  
give', O.N. gifa, Goth. giban, also ȝiren from  
O.E. gifan is found.

## B. Vowels.

In Ur-nordisk, when the nasal following an original 'i' dropped, the 'i' became 'ō'; in English, under the same condition, the vowel did not change its quality but quantity. Teutonic *i* + nasal equals O.N. *ō* or O.E. *ū*. In the light of this fact we may consider O.E. *toft* to be from O.N. *toft* (p-f) 'a place to build on,' which seems to be related to *tom* 'empty'.

Teutonic *a*, represented in Gothic by *ā*, became *æ* regularly in West Saxon except before 'w' and before a nasal, in the former case it became *ā*, the latter *ō*. In West Scandinavian Teutonic *a* is represented by *ā*. A Middle English word containing an *ā* + nasal, going back to a Teutonic *ā* + nasal presupposes a Scandinavian origin. A few words may be so considered: O.E. *nām* 'signature of property' O.N. *nam* based on the second stem form of *nima*, the West Saxon form *nom*, but also *nam* occurred in the Saxon period - M.E. *span-*

new 'very new'; O.N. *spannagr*, Goth. *speda* found only in the comparative and superlative - M.E. *wān* 'hope'; O.N. *vān* (verb *vana*) Goth. *wens* (*wanjan* 'to wait for') - M.E. *frā*, O.N. *frū*, Goth. *frans* - O.E. *rān* 'rapine', O.N. *ran*, the same word as the Gothic *ragn*, as found in Modern English *ransack* 'seeking through the house'.

### C. Diphthongs.

Teutonic 'eu' is represented in Anglian dialects by *eo* or *io*, i-umlaut *ie* or *ij*, which developed in Middle English to *ē*. In Old Norse Teutonic 'eu' became regularly *fō* or *fiū*, by i-umlaut *ij* before R. Accordingly a word in the Anglian dialect showing an 'i' from Teutonic 'eu' supported by R may be considered of Scandinavian origin. However, only a very limited number of words can be added with any degree of certainty under this category: M.E. *lire* 'face' or 'complexion'; O.N. *hlyr*, O.E. *hleor* 'cheek' - M.E. *mire* 'urt'; O.N. *mjorr*

'swamp' — Eng. *tir*, O.N. *týr*.

In Old Norse Teutonic 'au' remained 'au'. In East Scandinavian, however, it early became an open ö. sound. In English Teutonic 'au' developed into 'ea', by i-umlaut 'ie'. There are several words in English that show the West Scandinavian 'au'. M.E. *blaute* 'soft'; O.N. *blautr*, related to the Gothic verb *blaupfan* — M.E. *glaumen* 'to make noise'; O.N. *glaumur*, the Gothic cognate has been lost. — M.E. *gaum* 'care'; O.N. *gaumur*, Goth. *gaumjan* 'to see'. — M.E. *caupe* 'to pay for'; O.N. *kaupa*, Goth. *kaupjan* 'to trade'. The O.E. form is *ceopan* which could not, according to any phonetic, very well develop into *caupe*. — M.E. *leus* 'loose'; O.N. *lauss*, Gothic *lauss*; *lausen* is from the same stem. — M.E. *raute* 'cattle'; O.N. *raut*. — M.E. *sawth* 'red'; O.N. *raudr*, Goth. *raufes*, O.E. *read* has given us *red*.  
By i-umlaut West Scandinavian 'au' became *öy* or *ey*, in most cases the later. This um-



lanted form of 'ai' is represented in Middle English loan-words by 'ai': Only a few words show this form: M.E. *laisen* 'to free or to untie'; O.N. *leysa*, Goth. *laiofan*. The regular native form would be *lisen*, *i* from O.E. *ea* - M.E. *traisten* 'to confide'; O.N. *trøyata*, Goth. *trausti* (noun) verb form of that stem not extant, but from the Norse form we may expect a 'jan' suffix verb, <sup>+</sup>*trawjjan* - raise and staisp might be mentioned under this heading.

A test more far reaching than any of the preceding ones is that of the Teutonic *ai*. In West Scandinavian it remained intact, but written 'ii'; in Old English it changed to 'ā', by i-unlaut 'ā', Modern English 'ō' and 'ē' Middle English 'ai'; then, going back to Teutonic 'ai' cannot be of native origin. In Scandinavian loan-words this sound is represented by 'ey', 'ai' or 'eg'. Such loan-words are: M.E. *ay*, O.N. *ei* or *ey* (both forms are used) Goth. *aiws*, Gr. *αἰών*, 'everlasting time' - M.E. *aiten*

O.W.S. *beitā* 'to bait'. The native word is *bāton*, an iumlaut from *bātan*, & *baite* is from the same stem - M.E. *bleik* 'pale', O.N. *bleikr*, of the same stem is *bleiken*, O.N. *blíkja* 'to cause to become pale'; *bleyketer* is a hybrid, Scand. *bleikr* and the English suffix -*ester* - M.E. *gayte* 'goat', O.N. *geit*, Goth. *gaitreins*, The Anglo-Saxon is *gāt* - M.E. *graynet*, West-Scandinavian *grein* 'branch', dialectal Mod. Norw. *grein* - M.E. *geathen* 'to untangle' O.N. *greida*, Goth. *gareipjan*, Anglo-Saxon *radan* 'to counsel' - M.E. *hathen* based on O.N. *heill*, Goth. *hairjan* - M.E. *hathen* 'heathen, or those dwelling on the heath', O.N. *heidinn*, Goth. *hairpi* - M.E. *quainen* 'to cry', O.N. *krina*, Goth. *quainon* - M.E. *laik* 'game', O.N. *leikr*, Goth. *laiks* 'dance', also *leggkunn*, *laikin* - M.E. *laire* 'clay', O.N. *leir* - M.E. *leggtenn* 'to seek', O.N. *leitā*, Goth. *laistjan* or *wlaiston*, the 'w' before liquids was lost in Old Norw. - M.E. *leip*, by the side of *lað* & A.S. *lað*.

## Chapter VII.

### Scandinavian Loan-words not Proven Such by any Phonological Test.

There are many Scandinavian loanwords that cannot be proven such by any phonological test. It may also be noticed that West Scandinavian loanwords lend themselves more readily to such phonological test than do those of East Scandinavian origin, for the reason that West Scandinavian is, phonetically, further removed from West Germanic than is East Scandinavian. What would be a good test for an Icelandic word would probably not hold for a Danish. If we find in Middle English such a word as 'akka', we would be tolerable certain of its origin, the assimilation test would guide us; but quite different would it be in the case of 'anka', altho the same word, where the assimilation has not taken place, still we know both words are Scandinavian, the one from the West, the

other from the East. That is only one out of the many possible cases. The location of the literary centers has been rather against the preservation of the Scandinavian element. Modern English, which is based on the East Midland dialect, contains much less Norse element than do the dialects spoken further north. Yet there is said to be about seven hundred and twenty-five Scandinavian words in standard English, but a great many more are to be found in the dialects, which we may surmise from the vocabulary of such writers as Burns.

A large number of words, such as father, mother, house, thing, full, wise, will, mine, out, and under, were almost identical in Old English and Scandinavian. Not only was the common everyday vocabulary very much the same, but also the spirit and life of the two languages were essentially in harmony, which facts made it comparatively easy for the one language to adapt words and

terms from the other. It was a relatively simple matter for the English speaking population to modify a Scandinavian word in such a way that it lost most of its exoticism. That is just what they, in many cases, did. In some such manner we find that O.N. *bryd lamp* was changed to *brydlop*, the first part probably thru analogy with O.E. *brygd*. A point to be noted in regard to the Scandinavian loan-words is their general character, unlike the loanwords from French, Greek, and Latin of a later period in that they do not belong to any particular class of society or any particular profession - all spheres, all activities are represented here.

When the Scandinavians conquered England, they reorganized the system of administration, which they found there, in conformity with their own notion of government. The land was divided, taxes collected, and laws enforced according to the Scandinavian custom of doing it. This necessitated new

names and terms). Probably the chief among these terms is the word 'law' itself. It was known in the form *lagu*, O.N. *lag*; the English form shows a much older stage of the word than does the Old Norse. *Lagu* does not show the *u*-mutation. In general the Scandinavian loan-words show the form of about the year 900, almost 200 years earlier than the first writing down of the Eddas. *By-law* and *by-law* composed of *by-* 'city' and 'law'. The word is retained in *by-laws*, the first part of the word having been misinterpreted. Other words belonging to this class are *mal*, 'plea' (speech), *wip-ornal* 'answer' (to the charge), *stefnan* 'summon', O.N. *stefna*, *lysing* 'freedman' (one that is loosed), *þrall* 'a servant', and *infangens eof*. Most of these terms soon ceased to exist, and were superseded by Romance terms from the Norman Conquest.

## Chapter VIII.

### Syntactical Influence.

Judging from the democratic character of the loan-words in English we may conclude that the fusion of the two languages must have been of almost intimate nature. Just how far this fusion may have affected syntactical relations of English is a somewhat subtle matter, but in that light of the data at our disposal we may be justified in surmising a rather extended influence. That the two peoples could understand each other's language without much difficulty must have worked much in the direction of grammar simplification. Linguistically they stood to each other very much in the same relation as do the Norwegians and the Swedes to-day. They can, in a way, converse together tho' the one cannot speak the dialect of the other. Under such conditions the fine points

points of grammar will not carry the point. People will have to depend more upon the mere vocabulary than upon the syntactical construction for the meaning. A prolonged intercourse of this kind will result in imitation. Both parties, trying to gain the same point, will compromise on some intermediary line. They accept the principle of horse-dealers, 'giving in on both sides will soon bring the parties together.' Inflectional forms having lost much of their force soon disappear, only the strictly alive forms will long persist.

How far the English language has been affected by its amalgamation with the Scandinavian does not lend itself to any definite solution both on account of the scantiness of material from which to deduct ones conclusions and on account of the close relation of the two languages. Even if the material had been



more adequate the results would inevitably have been of a more or less doubtful character owing to the flexibility of the English syntax. At any rate, only extreme cases could be proven with any degree of certainty, since the affinity and the morphological structure of the two languages are so much alike.

In reading Dickens' *David Copperfield* I ran across a sentence like this: "You don't understand how 'tis that this here gentleman and me has wished to speak to you." I was much struck by the combination 'this here'. However, I find that the English occasionally make this mistake, and was so considered by Dickens, but with Norwegians who have learned the Norwegian language before the English it is exceedingly common. It may be that it can be explained in the light of the fact that the article in Norwegian is also used

as a suffix. At any rate, the Norwegians do not seem to feel the force of demonstratives, hence they add an adverb to intensify it. A phrase in Wilson bewrays foreign influence: "at one and the same time." It resembles very much a Norwegian idiom, "paa en og same tid." Resemblance however, does not always prove borrowing. An uncommon usage of 'til' is found in Scott, "speak till him, Mr. Francis." It corresponds very much to the Norwegian way of expressing the same idea: "tal til ham, Her Francis." Stevenson has: "sede kens what they learn folk there". 'Learn' here seems to mean 'to teach', a usage not in conformity with modern usage, but has been so used in the past; and may be only an obsolete phrase, yet there is a great similarity with the Danish and Norwegian 'lære', which means both to teach and to learn. Atkinson has a most unique phrase

"that way is the best," Norwegian, "denne  
 vi er den bedste."

Dr. Jespersen explains a few Shakespe-  
 rian phrases as of probable Scandinavian  
 influence; he mentions especially some  
 peculiar usage of should in the Elizabethan  
 times: "Where the devil should he learn our  
 language?" to be compared with "Hvor Fanden  
 skulde han lære vort sprog?" "Beside it  
 should appear" with the Danish "det skulde  
 synes," "he could have done it," with "han  
 kunde have gjort det." In every one of these  
 cases there is considerable resemblance be-  
 tween the phrases of the two languages, and  
 many nice things might be said in favor  
 of such a view, but after all it gets to be  
 only a view, and one that does not admit  
 of any conclusive proof.

## Chapter IX.

### Words Borrowed in Modern Times.

A few Scandinavian words have been borrowed in Modern times, most of which show a technical character. Notwithstanding the fact that there has existed, down to the present, a most intimate intercourse between England and the Scandinavian countries, the sphere of borrowing has been narrowed down to a few isolated cases.

Words of late borrowing are the following:

Kink 'a twist on a rope' (a sailor's term) Dan.  
kink - Dahlia (name of a flower) named in honor of the Swedish batonist Dahl - tungsten 'heavy stone or metal' from Swedish tung - 'heavy' and ten 'stone' - Law 'a projecting part of a wheel', Danish. Law - slag 'a dross of metal', Swedish slagg, related to Icelandic slagga - flossam 'work-age' Icelandic flat + same) 'something

flotting' - siskien (a certain kind of European birds), Danish siggen - lemming, a kind of rats at times very numerous in certain parts of Norway. The word is probably of Lapp origin - fog 'mist or vapor'; Icelandic fok; Danish fog found in such compounds as sneefog - flov 'a floating mass'; M. flo, Danish flogu as found in isfloger - flumee 'to dash'; Norsk. flunsa 'to hurry' - by-election 'city election, a word not yet used by the best writers - folkfest 'meeting of the people'.

The settlement of Northmen in Normandy brought considerable Scandinavian element into the French language, especially the Northern French. Altho the Scandinavian language was swallowed up by the French, yet it is not compatible with common experience to suppose that two nations should come in such close contact as did the Scandinavians and the French in this case without the one exerting some linguistic influence

on the other. The unbroken intercourse that has existed between the French and the English makes this factor by no means an unimportant one in determining the Scandinavian influence on English. The Norse words borrowed thru the medium of the French language show in many cases strange forms, but this may, in part at least, be ascribed to the fact that they had to undergo several radical changes in order to conform with the French language's morphological structure. Words of this class have nearly all been borrowed after the year sixteen hundred. Gaultlet 'gla', O.F. gaultlet, O.N. valtr - grimace, Fr. grimace, O.N. grimur-maðr 'a man with a grim face' - grudge, Fr. grancher, O.N. krypt-flaundr, O.F. flaundr, Norw. flundra 'a small flat fish' - frisk, Fr. frisquet, O.N. frískr 'lively' - frawn, O.F. frisquet, Norw. frøyga (to scowl) - fib, Fr. giber

Swedish *gippa* 'to move restively - blemish',  
 O.F. *blamer*, Icelandic *blaman* 'to tarnish -  
 abet, O.F. *abeter*, O.N. *beita*. The prefix is  
 Romance, Latin *ad* - 'bondage' 'in servi-  
 tude, O.F. *bondage*. The root of the word is  
 the Norse *bondi*; the suffix Romance - sound  
 'to measure the depth of the sea', Fr. *sunder*,  
 Norse *sund* - *waif* 'goods found without  
 an owner; O.F. *waif*, O.N. *vif*. Of the same  
 origin is *wain* - *wicket* 'small gate', O.F.  
*quicket*, O.N. *vikin*.

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