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HISTORY OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE
INFLUENCES - NORSE

Scandinavian (Norse) Influence.

The ~~Scandinavian~~ influence of Scandinavian language of an English began from the beginning of the Danish invasion of England towards the end of the 10th Century, and continued throughout the Scandinavian settlement - for nearly three centuries till the Norman Conquest - whose superior influence of French to bear upon the English language, the Doones were established in Northumbria, wherefrom they spread rapidly over northern and eastern England, and though temporarily checked by Alfred, they established their sway all over Island and became its virtual rulers for sometime. This close contact - spreading over several centuries naturally resulted in the introduction of a large and important - verse element in the English language.

In order to correctly estimate the Scandinavian influence on English, it is important - to remember the great similarity that existed between old English and old Norse. The two languages had an enormous number of identical words - nouns such as: man, wife, father, mother, life, house, thing, winter, sorrow, folk etc. - adjective such as, fall, well, well, better, best - pronoun like mine, their etc. verbs like meet, came, bring

bear, see, think, smile, side, car, stand, silent. The result was that of Anglo-Saxons had no difficulty in understanding Viking and other Vikings looked upon the English language as one of their own.

The Scandinavians modified the meaning of many English words, "bread" in O.E. meant "fragment" but the modern meaning of the word has come from the Scandinavian word. Similarly, "dream" in O.E. meant "joy", but the modern meaning of the word has

been taken over from old Norse "dræm". In O.E. "plough" meant a measure of land but "plough" has been derived from the old Norse "plogr".

The Scandinavians introduced many everyday noun and commonplace verb and adjectives. Some of the examples of the Scandinavian noun which we use extensively today are husband, fellow, sky, skin, wing, haven, root, skill, anger, gate, etc. Among the commonplace adjectives taken from the Scandinavian we find happy, seemly, low, meek, scant, loose, odal, all, wrong, ugly, rotten etc. In the opinion of ~~Ose~~ Ose Gjesper, the most indispensable elements of the English language have undergone the strongest Scandinavian influence, and those grammatical words the small coins of language, which Chinese grammarians term "empty".

words and which are nowhere else transferred from one language to another, have been taken over from Danish into English. Thus, the English have taken from the Scandinavians ~~for~~ pronouns like 'they', 'them', 'the same' and probably, both the comparatives, like 'more' (lessen) 'less' (less), 'helder' (salter) nominal adverbs like, 'hither' (hence) 'thence' (thence) 'whither' (whence) 'together' (together) conjunction like 'though' 'and' (and); preposition like ~~for~~ 'pro' and 'thru'.

The Scandinavian influence affected not only the English vocabulary but also the grammar and syntax. The 's' of the third person singular in the present indicative tense of verbs is said to have been due to the Scandinavian influence. The words 'scant' 'want' 'athwart' 'preserve' in the final 't' the native adjective ending of old Norse, According to Jespersen the omission of the relative pronoun in relative clauses and the retention or the omission of the conjunction 'that' are also due to Scandinavian influence. The rules governing in the use of 'will' and 'shall' in Middle English are much the same as in Scandinavian. (scant → not-ample, deficient- fare - food provided at, fable)

The most important thing to be noted in connection with the Scandinavian loan words is their extreme commonplaces and usefulness in everyday life. From no other foreign source English language has received so large proportion of simple even mono-syllabic everyday words, as from Norse. This commonplace, non-technical homely and democratic character of Scandinavian loan words is in sharp contrast with the aristocratic technical and fashionable character of the French loan words. Otto Jespersen has very fittingly said, 'An Englishman is content to say "I'm ill" or "die" without Scandinavian words; they are to the language what "bread" and "eggs" are to the daily fare.'

~~16~~
13/2

4