A HISTORY OF FOREIGN WORDS IN ENGLISH

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PREFACE

The first thing that is wrong in this book is the title. Very many of the words dealt with are certainly not now 'foreign', but have been completely naturalized in English for centuries. But since they are in origin not of the common Germanic stock, the phrase 'foreign words' may stand, and will perhaps be preferred by some to the technical term 'loan-words'.

In a volume which has to cover so long a period as that of the whole history of the English language, the treatment must necessarily be incomplete. Perhaps the time has not yet come for a really comprehensive work—it would need several volumes—on loan-words in English. A great deal of spade-work on individual languages and problems remains to be done. The great Period Dictionaries now being prepared in America, to the publication of which we are looking forward, will be of the utmost value in supplementing the material afforded by the *Oxford English Dictionary*; and more material may be found in still unpublished records and accounts of early travellers and traders.

The present volume does not limit its attention to foreign words existing in English at the present day. This would give a wrong impression of earlier periods. It does not, however, attempt to trace the history of loan-words in all the local dialects of English at all periods; this requires separate study. Emphasis has been laid throughout on the *first* introductions from individual languages and the *first* appearances of individual words. The greatest amount of space has been devoted to early loans from Latin, French, and Scandinavian, since these languages are the most important sources of our adoptions. Examples of the words in actual use (i.e. quotations from contemporary writers) are given freely, especially in the earlier periods.

In the sections on Old English, all the most important literary texts, glossaries, and other documents have been examined. For Middle English only a comparatively small number of what it is hoped are really representative texts are discussed; these are of

various types and from various areas. This seemed the best method of dealing with the masses of material available. In considering words from Middle English texts it is, of course, safest to take the words as belonging to the time of the *manuscript* used, and not necessarily to that of the *original* document, if the former is a copy. There is obviously always the possibility of changes and additions in copying.

Probably no two people would agree entirely as to what words should be admitted to such a volume as this, especially when the words in question come from the more remote languages such as Chinese, Maori, and so on. Words which are quite familiar to people who live or have travelled in the East, in Australasia, in South America, may be quite unknown and of small interest to those who are familiar only with other parts of the world. My choice of words to be discussed in the sections on the modern period may seem arbitrary, but I have tried to include those which the ordinary English reader is most likely to come across in not too specialized literature.

The appendices on the phonology of Latin, French, and Scandinavian words give, as will be seen, only the main features, and these very briefly ; they are merely intended for reference.

Discussion of controversial matters has been avoided, but references will in some cases be found in footnotes to books or articles dealing with individual points.

The Bibliography gives only the most important of the works which have been consulted. I am most deeply indebted to the Dictionaries mentioned in this list, and in particular to the *Oxford English Dictionary* and the *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*, without whose help this book could certainly not have been written.

I have to thank my colleague, Dr. E. C. Martin (Reader in Imperial History, University of London), for advice and help in historical matters, and for her patience in answering questions. I should also like to thank my family for much practical assistance, and several generations of students who have helped by asking questions.

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Chapter I

INTRODUCTORY

The English language has throughout its history accepted with comparative equanimity words from other languages with which it has been in contact, and though there have been periods during which speakers and writers of English have made use of foreign words to an exaggerated extent, it is probable that most people will agree that the foreign element in normal English usage has been of value.

Some languages avoid as far as possible the use of alien terms, substituting for them, when an expression for a new object or idea is needed, new words made up of native elements, but England has always welcomed the alien, and many hundreds of words of non-English origin are now part and parcel of our vocabulary, indistinguishable from the native stock except to those with some knowledge of etymology. The language of this country has, it is true, been particularly open to foreign influence, partly through the succession of invaders who came into contact with English speakers during the Middle Ages; partly through the enterprise of the English themselves, who have carried their language into the far corners of the world, where it has gathered, like a snowball, new matter as it passed on its way. There are few nations and few languages which have had as many opportunities as the English for acquiring new words by the direct influence of other tongues.

The adoption of foreign words in any dialect may come about in different ways, and the extent to which foreign elements become naturalized varies very considerably. Contact between peoples of alien speech may be of several kinds; they may meet for instance through conquest, through colonization, through trade, or through literature. When one nation subdues another which speaks a different language, the conquerors, if their object has been political power rather than settlement, may constitute an authority, or ruling class, which is in point of view of numbers

much in the minority compared with the whole body of the conquered people. In a case like this, it is usually the native language that survives, though the incoming dialect will very probably transfer to the native vocabulary words which express its own methods of government, and other cultural words. This has happened in several instances in Western Europe in the early Middle Ages: the Franks in Latin-speaking Gaul, the Normans in France, the Norman-French in England. In each of these some members of the ruling classes as well as of the subject-classes must have been bilingual, and each in speaking his own language would be liable to introduce into it words, especially of a technical or specialized character, that he has learnt from the other.

This is what takes place when the conquerors who form a governing minority have established themselves in their new country as a separate unity, and have retained little or no connexion with their original home and the speakers of their own language, or have become politically independent. If, however, the conquered country or province does not become an independent state under its new rulers, but is controlled by the original government, so that the ruling class is in constant contact with, and continually reinforced by, people speaking their own language, it has usually happened that the dialect of the rulers has won the day, and has spread throughout the community, absorbing some words from the native speakers, chiefly such as concern local products, natural features, etc., but without necessarily undergoing radical changes in itself. An example of this is afforded by the relative positions of the Romans and Celts in Gaul, where the Latin speech established itself after acquiring a very small proportion of words from the native Gaulish dialect.

A different set of circumstances arises when the invasion is for the purpose of settlement or colonization rather than merely for the sake of political power. If the newcomers arrive in such numbers as to form a majority over the native speakers, and in such military or political strength as to acquire complete control over these, or dispossess them, the dialect of the conquerors or colonists will have the upper hand from the start, wherever they establish themselves. They will, however, adopt from the natives whom they displace words which denote native products, etc.,

and occasionally native customs, which may have been unfamiliar before. This happened, for instance, when the Anglo-Saxons came to England, eventually in numbers large enough to render the Britons a minority of little importance, or in some areas perhaps to oust them altogether. It has happened again in many areas of European colonization (e.g. the English in Australia), where the language of the newcomers has never shown any likelihood of yielding to the native idiom.

Sometimes warfare aiming at conquest results in a type of immigration, rather than colonization, as in the case of the Scandinavians in this country, where conflict led finally to more or less peaceful settlement, where the invaders established themselves side by side with the natives without overwhelming them or driving them out, and where the race, customs, and even the language, of the two peoples were sufficiently alike to make intercourse between the two, and the subsequent bilingualism, easy and natural. Here the Englishman who acquired Scandinavian (and no doubt also the Scandinavian who learnt English) introduced the new terms into his own language, where they remained even after English had established itself in all the areas of the Nordic settlement, and Englishmen and Danes alike had ceased to be bilingual.

Of course, immigration is not always preceded or accompanied by hostility, and immigrants into a colony with an already constituted authority will usually adopt the general speech of the colony even if their own is an alien one. If the immigrants come in a large enough body to form a small community of their own within the greater one, they are likely to retain their own speech, for a time at least, even though eventually yielding to the pressure of the language spoken all about them. There are many instances of this in the communities of different nationality which have settled in the United States—Jewish, German, Norwegian, etc.—and now are gradually giving up their own dialects, though carrying into their newly acquired English some part of their own vocabulary, some words from which may spread to more distant fields.

For English speakers, trade has always been an important factor in the introduction of new words and of new ideas. Even before English had separated from its Germanic stock it was

trade almost as much as conquest which brought into it its first words from other languages, as will be seen in the following chapter, in which the influence of Latin on the Germanic vocabulary will be dealt with. It was trade that in later times brought us acquainted with the words of many another nation in the New World as well as in the old. In this respect trade and scientific exploration go hand in hand, and can hardly be separated; and the merchant-adventurer holds an important place in the history of the English language.

So far we have considered words borrowed in actual speech. Sometimes, however, loan-words will come into a language from a written source; in this case they usually pass first into the written language, and thence may or may not pass into the spoken language. Examples of this may be found in plenty in the borrowings from Latin in the later Old English period, when English writers and translators took over, from Latin originals or models, Latin words to serve their purpose, sometimes retaining their original inflexions, sometimes using the appropriate English inflexion. Perhaps the majority of these words remain in the category of what may be called "learned" words, and never reach full currency with the average speaker, if indeed they reach the spoken language at all. We may instance the Old English *aspide* 'asp', *sanct* 'saint', *lenticul* 'lentil', *protomartyr*, *milite* 'soldiery', *polente*, *grammatic*, *circul* 'circle', *anfiteatra*, *termen* 'fixed point', as various types of learned words; and as words which, introduced first from literature, became more or less 'popular', *cleric* 'clerk, priest', *offrian* 'to sacrifice', *apostel*, *nōn* 'noon', *cucumere* 'cucumber', *turtur* 'turtle-dove'. In more modern times it is science rather than literature that has been responsible for the introduction of words of a learned type, and English dictionaries, of a general character as well as purely scientific, contain hundreds of words formed directly from Greek or Latin elements, which are never used by the ordinary speaker and may never be seen or heard by him. Here again, some of these words of scientific origin do pass into popular speech, as has obviously happened in such cases as *telephone*, *telegram*, *telegraph*, *gramophone*, and medical terms such as *appendicitis*, *bronchitis*, which are used by the layman as well as by the specialist.

It happens frequently in the course of the history of our language that a word is borrowed more than once from the same source (or from developments of this source), perhaps once as a popular word and again as a learned or technical one. The Latin word *uncia* was adopted by Germanic (on the continent) as a measure of length, and appears in Old English as *ynce*, Modern English *inch*; a few centuries later, English borrowed the word again, this time in its Romance form, **untsia*, which becomes in Old English *yntse* (now obsolete), used as a measure of weight; the French descendant, *unce*, *once*, of Romance **untsia*, came into Middle English, again as a measure of weight, and has become Modern English *ounce*; all these were popular loans; but the final version, *uncial*, borrowed in the seventeenth century from Latin *unciālis*, the adjective of *uncia*, is definitely a learned loan.

English has a particularly large number of these 'repeated' loans (in some of which each of the pair or group is of a quite ordinary popular type), owing to the fact of her numerous borrowings from Latin in the Early Middle Ages followed by even more plentiful adoptions from French, which developed from Latin, and further by the continued contact between English and French which has led to many more introductions from French in recent times, by the English habit (renewed in the Renaissance period) of adopting words from Latin, and finally by the fact that even within the Middle English period a word may be borrowed twice over, from different dialects of French. Not very many original Latin words appear in all these five forms in Modern English, since a new loan has often ousted an earlier one, but a large number may be found in two or three of these groups; cf. *catch*, *chase*, *capt(ive)* etc.; *mint*, *money*; *wine*, *vine(yard)*; *drake*, *dragon*; *master*, *magistr(ate)*; *trivet*, *tripod*; *castle*, *château*; *corpse*, *corps*; and so on.

Some words have entered English, not by direct contact with the language which is their source, but indirectly, through an intervening language. In this way many of the earlier Italian loans came to us through French, the Italian of the Renaissance having reached France first, and thence having passed on to us. In this way, too, the earliest loan-words from the east have come to us through Latin, many of them having already passed through

Greek before reaching Latin. Even in the early centuries of this era, before communication became as simple and rapid as it is to-day, words travelled thousands of miles, westwards from Asia to Europe, across Europe from east to west and from south to north, all round the shores of the Mediterranean, from nation to nation and from generation to generation. Most of these much-travelled words are objects of trade or culture. The word *pepper*, for instance, came first from some eastern language into Greek, thence into Latin and thence into English; *elephant* was first Egyptian, then Greek, Latin, French, and finally English; *camel* was originally Semitic, and this too passed through Greek and Latin before reaching our language. *Albatross* is based ultimately on a Phœnician word which drifted successively into Greek, Arabic, and Portuguese, and then into English. *Apricot* began a long history in Latin, from which it passed in succession to Greek, Arabic, Spanish, French, and English. *Silk* has been Chinese, Greek, Latin, and finally English. *Carat* comes through Greek, Arabic, Italian, and French.

In recent times, English has partially adopted from distant countries many words which are used chiefly or exclusively in connexion with the countries from which they come, by people who themselves know these countries, or in books describing them, either of necessity (for lack of equivalent English terms), or for the sake of local colour. The book about South America will have its *gauchos*, *lariats*, *vaqueros*, *ponchos*, *cordilleras*, and *llanos*; the Malayan its *amboynas*, *copra*, *ihlang-ihlang*, *mangosteens*, *krises*, *parangs*, and *sarongs*; to the Anglo-Indian, his *chota hazris*, *tiffins*, *chits*, *baksheesh*, *dhobis*, *punkahs*, are as much a part of his everyday life as his *chutneys* and *curries*.

When used by English speakers, such words practically always adopt English inflexions. It has indeed been usual all through the history of loan-words in our language for them to become rapidly acclimatized enough to be treated grammatically and syntactically as English words. In modern times perhaps this does not mean very much, since so many of the more recent loans are nouns, and English nominal inflexions are so few; but it holds good in the earlier periods, when verbs and adjectives were adopted freely from Latin and French, though occasionally in Late Old English some words of the learned type,

borrowed in the written language, may keep their Latin inflexions. A few foreign plurals—chiefly in more recent borrowings from the classical languages—have been retained in English, these having become familiar, to many of those who use them, in the course of a classical education; such are *agenda*, *desiderata*, *data*, *magi*, *radii*, *gladioli*, *nebulae*, *criteria*, *crises*, *theses*; some nouns have the foreign plural as well as a native form, sometimes, though not always, with a distinction of meaning, e.g. *appendixes*, *appendices*; *indexes*, *indices*; *formulas*, *formulae*; *funguses*, *fungi*; *geniuses*, *genii*; *hippopotamuses*, *hippopotami*; and in words other than Greek or Latin, *cherubs*, *cherubim*; *bandits*, *banditti*; *virtuosos*, *virtuosi*. But classical words, even the more recent adoptions, which have become entirely popular never have foreign plurals; we have *irises*, *crocuses*, *circuses*, *villas*, *spectators*, *omens*, *nasturtiums*, not *irides*, *croci*, *circi*, *villae*, *spectatores*, *omina*, *nasturtia*.

Foreign words, when once adopted into English, have always been used freely with native prefixes and suffixes. Adverbs in *-ly*, adjectives in *-ful*, *-less*, abstract nouns in *-ness*, *-ship*, are found with French first elements almost as frequently as with English (e.g. *nicely*, *pleasantly*; *cheerful*, *beautiful*, *fruitless*; *gentleness*, *companionship*, etc.); and so also the English prefixes *un-*, *fore-*, *over-*, etc., may have foreign second elements (e.g. *unaided*, *unbar*, *unconscious*, *forecast*, *overcharge*, *overawe*, etc.). Hybrid compounds of noun plus noun, adjective plus noun, etc., are not uncommon; such are *salt-cellar* (English and French), *heirloom* (French and English), *fainthearted* (French and English), *longlegged* (English and Scandinavian), *blackmail* (English and Scandinavian), as well as the more recent scientific words such as *claustrophobia*, *Anglophile*, and even *television*. English has, moreover, adopted foreign (especially Latin) prefixes and suffixes, and many of these are living elements which can be used with words from any source (e.g. *pre-*, *infra-*, *inter-*, *-ism*, *-ize*).

When a foreign word is borrowed, it may or may not retain its original pronunciation in the adopting language. If each of its sounds already exists in the latter, it will probably be adopted in a pretty accurate form; if, however, some of its sounds are alien to the adopting language, each of these will be replaced by

the nearest native sound. Even if some speakers are familiar with, and can pronounce, the dialect from which it comes, their pronunciation will not be generally adopted. Thus there were different pronunciations of some of the French words borrowed in Middle English, the French nasal vowels, for instance, being retained for a time at least by bilingual speakers, while those who spoke only English substituted for them the English non-nasal vowels. Sometimes a foreign word in English will be partly anglicized, even by those who speak the language from which it comes. For instance, the word *garage* is usually pronounced with the first vowel as in English *hat* [æ], and not with the French vowel, but retains the French [ž] for the final consonant, though this sound does not occur as a final consonant in native words. Among some who do not speak Standard English, the word is completely anglicized, the [ž] being replaced by the group [dž] (as in the second syllable of *carriage*), which is common in English in this position. Similarly, the word *voile*, as the name of a material, usually retains its French [wa], though somewhat lengthened, but is sometimes heard, in shops, etc., with the anglicized (spelling pronunciation) *oi* [voil]; while French words with *é*, *è*, or *ê* have the vowel diphthongized to [ei] (e.g. *fête*, *fiancé*) since Modern Standard English has normally no long [ē]. Again, the Spanish *ll*, which is an *l* made with the middle of the tongue (in the same position as the consonant *y* [j]) and not with the tip, has the ordinary English *l* substituted for it, in words such as *llama*, *llano*; and for the Spanish *ñ* (pronounced like the *gn* in French *montagne*) English people will use the two consonants [nj], sometimes even writing it *ny*, e.g. in *canyon* (Spanish *cañon*).

Once a word has become perfectly assimilated in the spoken language, each of its sounds will follow all the fortunes of that sound in the adopting language; French ī and ē, for example, borrowed in the Middle English period, undergo the same developments as the English ī and ē of that period, the former becoming [ai] as in Present-Day English *line*, *fine*, the latter [ī] as in *chief*, *brief*.

Apart from the anglicizing tendency already referred to, the more recently a word has been adopted in English, the more likely it is to retain its original pronunciation, since it will have

been affected by fewer purely English changes—changes which have been going on continuously ever since English became an independent language in the fourth or fifth century.

The principal languages which have affected the vocabulary of English have been Scandinavian, French, and Latin, the last most of all. Scandinavian words were borrowed most freely between the ninth century and the twelfth, French words during the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries, but Latin words have been making their way into English, throughout almost the whole period of its history, first into the spoken language. later into written English (through religion, literature, and science), though this latter form of borrowing has given nany words also to the spoken language.

During the Modern Period, that is to say after about 1400, the most important period of foreign borrowing was the latter part of the sixteenth century, and the early seventeenth century. Then, as will be seen, many different languages first become represented in the English vocabulary, owing to the remarkable increase in England's direct contacts with foreign countries at this time, which led to direct borrowing from languages which had previously affected the language only indirectly, and also to the appearance of words from languages previously unknown in England or even in Europe.

Before beginning an historical examination of the types of words borrowed from each of the languages which have influenced English, of the circumstances in which such borrowing began, and of the character of the sources in which they are first recorded, it will be well to consider some of the classes of what may be reckoned as loan-words which are not dealt with here.

Phrases from foreign sources are not often fully acclimatized, and are almost always used as aliens—printed in italics, or in inverted commas, and so forth ; such are many French phrases, e.g. *de trop, en règle, tout ensemble, femme de chambre, par excellence, feu de joie, joie de vivre,* and Latin phrases, e.g. *non sequitur, a priori, ad hoc, sine die, sine qua non* (though it is true that to some people such Latin groups have a less foreign atmosphere than the French ones, probably because they are usually pronounced with entirely English sounds).

Secondly, *names of places,* when these are used as the names

of products, etc., without, however, the original sense being fully lost. Some place-names have become so thoroughly obscured (through early borrowing and consequently numerous sound-changes, or by dissociation from an original place of manufacture), that they have to be accepted as ordinary loans, e.g. *chest*(*nut*), *currant*, *cambric*, *calico*, which should be compared with such forms as *Chablis*, *Moselle*, *Chianti*, and other names of wines, *Angora* (wool), *Morocco* (leather), *Nankin* (china), etc., (some of which may be used either absolutely or attributively, like the last three).

Then there are what are sometimes called 'translation-loans', especially common in the case of compounds in the older periods of English, when a foreign word expressing a new idea is represented by the nearest equivalent of each of its elements, as when in Old English, for the Latin word *ūni-cornus*, the English form *ān-horn*, = one-horn, is coined; *all-mihtiġ* for Latin *omnipotens*, *gōd-spell* (Gospel) for Latin *evangelium* (from Greek *eu-angelion* 'good message').

Another type of word not dealt with in the present volume is to be found in forms borrowed by Standard English from other dialects of English, e.g. words from American English; or from Scottish or Northern English, such as *bairn*, *raid*, *hale*, which have a typically northern phonological development, or are known to have been widely current in the north before they appear in Standard English. (Words in Scottish, Irish, etc. of non-English origin, are, however, included, since these are really foreign words.)

To conclude this chapter, it must be emphasized that the 'first recorded use' of a word, especially in the earlier periods, does not necessarily imply 'first use', (*a*) because a word may be in current use for some time before it appears in any written document, and (*b*) because obviously many words may have been recorded for the first time in documents no longer extant. But in later periods the first occurrence in writing, particularly of words from the more remote languages, or of purely 'learned' loans, such as some of those mentioned in the concluding chapter, may be in actual fact the first *use* of the word in English speech or writing, or be almost exactly contemporary with this.

And so, leaving more general considerations, we must turn to a more detailed study.

Chapter II

LATIN WORDS BEFORE THE CONQUEST

The history of Latin words in English begins in the continental period before the Angles, Saxons, and Jutes crossed the North Sea to settle in this country. From the time of Julius Caesar onwards we have evidence from the Roman historians of contact between the Germanic and the Latin peoples, which led to the adoption of Germanic words into Latin, and of Latin words into Germanic. The Roman armies included northern cohorts, and their familiarity with Latin military terminology and with the names of everyday objects in use in camp and town, served to introduce Latin terms into the native dialects of these soldiers from Nordic tribes. Tacitus mentions Germani who understood Latin, but close acquaintance with it was perhaps not widespread even among members of the legions, a limited, partly technical, vocabulary of Latin words being sufficient for professional needs.

The interchange of words between Germanic and Latin speakers for the first two or three centuries of this era took place in the spoken language; that is to say, it was not usually Classical Latin which lent and borrowed but the widespread, popular, Vulgar Latin, which was the ancestor of the modern Romance languages, and which, even as early as the third century, was beginning to split up into its different branches in different parts of the Roman Empire. From our point of view the most important of these was the Gallo-Roman, from which came the majority of such early loans into English as show any dialectal variation from Common Romance or Vulgar Latin.

The words adopted from Germanic into Latin for the most part show no particular dialectal characteristics, which indicates that the borrowings date from an early period (perhaps before A.D. 350–400), though some are not recorded until considerably later, appearing for the first time in the individual Romance languages (e.g. in French or Italian). Most of these words are military terms; there is, for instance, *burgus* (cf. O.E. *burh*

'fortified place, city', Mod.E. *borough*; Goth. *baurgs*) in the sense of 'small fort; watch-tower' (the modern French form is *bourg*), which appears in second-century inscriptions, and is used by Vegetius in the fourth century. This writer, however, implies that the word is not fully naturalized: *castellum parvulum, quem burgum vocant* 'a little fort, which they call *burgus*'. Isidore, more than two hundred years later, has a similar phrase: *burgos vulgo vocant* 'they call them *burgos* in the vulgar tongue'. *Drungus* 'a body of soldiers' is used by both Vopiscus and Vegetius in the fourth century. *Carrago* 'a barricade of wagons', from *carr* + Gmc. **hagō* 'hedge, barrier', is recorded by Ammianus Marcellinus about A.D. 400 as a Gothic word. (The element *carr*, which appears also in Latin as *carrus* 'wagon', is a Celtic word.) Among terms denoting articles of commerce, Latin borrowed *spelta*, a kind of grain, 'spelt' (first recorded A.D. 301, see Walde, *Lat. etymol. Wörterbuch*), *sāpo* 'soap'; and among names of animals *alce(s)* 'elk' and *ūrus* 'wild ox'. Further, Romance used the words *brando* 'sword', *helmo* 'helmet', *gonfalone* 'standard', *mariscalco* 'farrier', *baldo* 'bold', besides several names of colours, which are common to a number of Romance dialects, and the adoption of which, it has been suggested, was due to the habit of the Germanic tribes (mentioned by Tacitus) of painting their wooden shields with colours. Thus Mod. French has *blanc*, *brun*, *gris*, *bleu*, all of Germanic origin. It happens not infrequently that a word borrowed by Romance from Germanic, and established in the French dialects, was later adopted by English among its loans from Anglo-Norman or Central French.

It has been indicated above that the first spread of Latin words into Germanic was due to military influence. After the Roman soldier came the Roman merchant. From the time of the first establishment by Julius Caesar of an imperial province in the neighbourhood of the Rhine, the trade of Italy turned in this direction, and the inhabitants of the new province quickly learnt to approve the new stuffs and household vessels, the plants and their products, the ornaments and the games, which came to them from the south. Roman coins became generally used, and, when local mints were eventually set up, classical designs were followed. Towards the north, beyond the limits of the Roman

province, the spread of objects and ideas, and the words which accompanied them, was slower, and there is a not inconsiderable number of early loan-words from Latin to be found in the southern dialects of Germany, which apparently did not penetrate as far as the shores of the Baltic and the North Sea, and therefore are not found in Old English, or appear there only in a form which makes it certain that they were borrowed after the settlement in this country.

Since the earliest records of English date from the seventh century only, it follows that our evidence for the earliest loan-words from Latin is of an indirect character. Of the Latin words which occur in Old English, a fairly large number occur also in Old High German, in Gothic, in Old Saxon, in Dutch, or other Germanic dialects, and their wide diffusion points to early adoption. Sometimes, instead of or in addition to this, the form which they have assumed in Old English indicates the date of borrowing, since many of the sound-changes characteristic of Old English can be fairly accurately dated, and the absence of certain distinctively English developments in the borrowed words shows the time of their introduction to have been subsequent to such phonological changes. (Cf. the [sk] of *school*, O.E. *scōl*, Lat. *schola*, and of *scuttle*, O.E. *scutel*, Lat. *scutula*, with the [ʃ] of the earlier loan *shrine*, O.E. *scrīn*, Lat. *scrīnium* ; when the two first were adopted the tendency for *sk* to become [ʃ] in English was at an end.) Further, the presence or absence in the borrowed words of certain datable developments in Vulgar Latin gives some indication of the date of borrowing ; for instance, O.E. *pipor* ' pepper ' must have been adopted before the time of the Vulgar Latin change of intervocalic *p* to *b*, later *v* (cf. Fr. *poivre*), or O.E. would have **pifer* (*f* = *v*) ; on the other hand, O.E. *cæfester* ' halter ' (Lat. *capistrum*) represents Vulgar Lat. *cabistrum* or *cavistrum*, and so must have been borrowed after the period of this change.

After the English came to this country the chief source of Latin loan-words was the Vulgar Latin used by the Romano-Britons. It is sometimes impossible to distinguish between loans of the later continental period (between 300 and 450) and those of the first centuries of the settlement (450–650), and in some cases, though these are in a minority, words included in the